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July/August 2000
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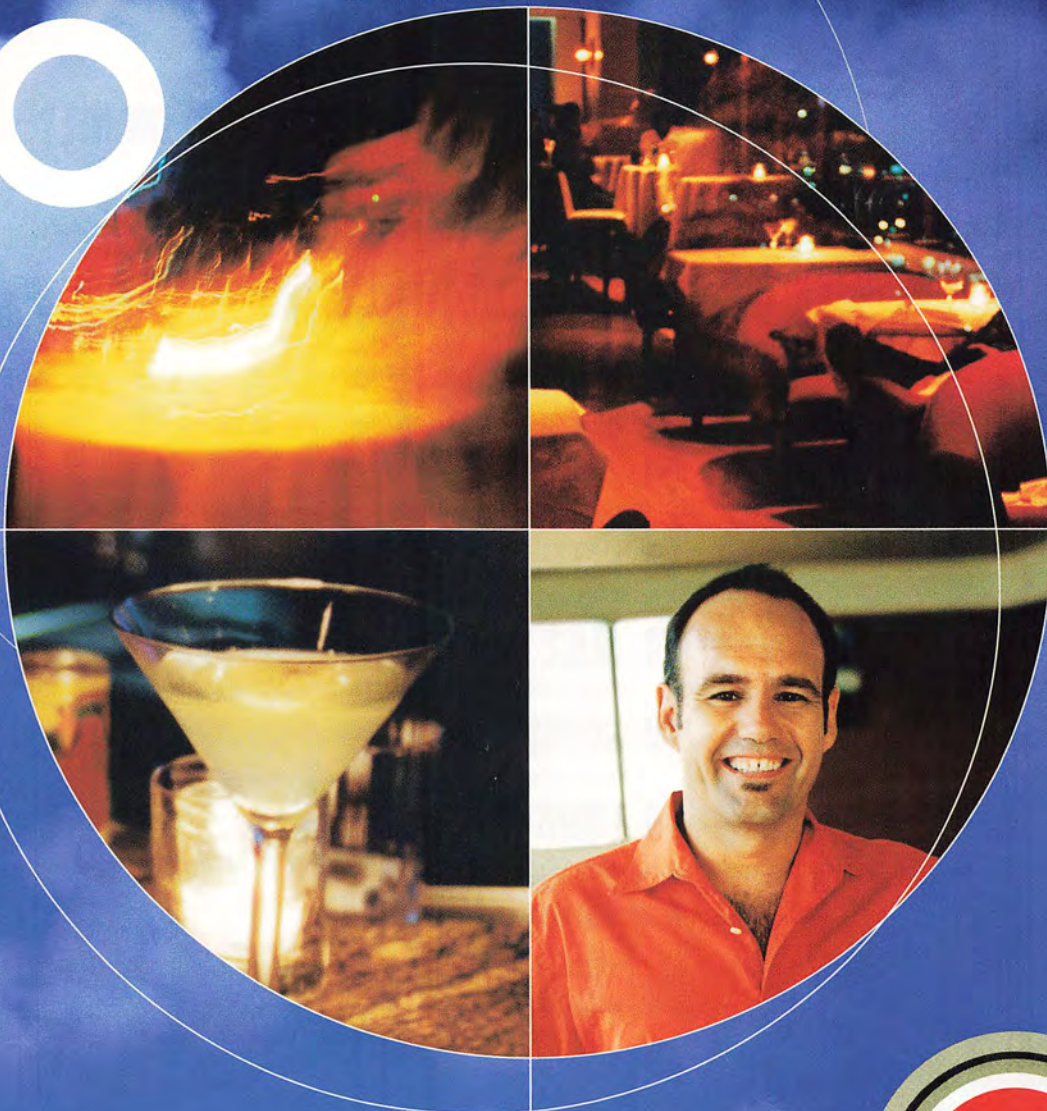
By nightfall, the living wallpaper shows the lights of LA popping out of the darkness. Elevators continue to bring up revelers by the dozens as tables are pushed aside to make room for an impromptu dance party. If you haven't figured it out by now, take a look out from the eastern facade where it's spelled out on a hillside 30 feet high and luminous. This is HOLLYWOOD!

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July/August 2000
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Barry Rosen ©

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WHEN GOOD PIZZA GOES BAD

For a long time I hated pizza. It wasn't for the obvious toppings-related reasons, however. When I order a pizza now, I eat the equivalent of my body weight in pepperoni and sausage and then float them both in plenty of beer. No, my aversion was more experiential. You see, I used to work in a pizza parlor.

It was clearly a case of knowing too much, the old "chef spit in the soup"

the dealing with the customers or even getting the right kind of topping on the pizza. The biggest dilemma was encountered during the baking process. Brandishing a long iron rod with a pointed hook on one end, the "bubble popper," which always seemed to end up being me, had to stand next to the hot oven and watch the pizzas cook. Then, just at the right moment, you had to pop the bubbles in the crust with the rod.

Brandishing a long iron rod with a pointed hook on one end, the "bubble popper," which always seemed to end up being me, had to stand next to the hot oven and watch the pizzas cook.



Randy Lorentzen/Pixar R

story. Not that I ever did that—even to those belligerent customers who demanded five-star service from a bunch of college students who were only working there so we could put gas in our cars and buy beer for the weekends. Nope, I played it straight. You ordered anchovies, you got anchovies. You ordered rotten, bony, dried-out, chewy fish, you got anchovies. It was just that after pumping out thousands of pies on the pizza assembly line, I kind of lost my taste for those cheesy, tomatoey disks.

The take-out pizza comparison we did for this issue was eye opening for me for several reasons, not the least of which was the overall high quality of the food.

When I worked in pizza, the toughest job on the assembly line was not

You see, our secret recipe for the crust had one major drawback. Approximately three minutes into the baking process, the crust would inflate like a balloon. Left alone, the pizza would end up resembling the Pontiac Silverdome, with the cheese, tomato sauce and toppings sliding down the sides and onto the 350-degree oven surface. A bubble popper who was asleep at the switch, or in this case, rod, was notified of his error by the acrid smell of burning bell peppers and onions.

More often than not, the bubble-popping process would occur a few minutes later than the optimum popping time, creating a misshapen pizza with a larger than appropriate crust and all the toppings jammed in the center. I'm not proud of the work. It wasn't art.

So when editor John Pearley Huffman told me he wanted to do a take-out pizza comparison for this issue, I figured it would be a battle for last. The pizza that most closely resembled, well, a pizza would win. Not so, Guido. In fact, I was amazed at the tasty, beautifully shaped pizzas that were paraded through our test cycle. I was humbled by the experience, entertained by the company and stuffed with good food. A complete day in my judgment. Hold the anchovies.

—Cam Benty

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The Old Man and the Sea of Hip-Hoppers

By Dan Dunn

I hope I die before I get old.
—The Who

"This place is kinda hip, huh? Kinda 'hip-hop' even?" I gamely asked the tattooed and pierced young lovely standing beside me. She gave me a perfunctory eyeballing, then rapidly relocated to the other side of the room.

My quest to reconnect with youth was off to an inauspicious start.

Maybe it was the jeans.

I'd purchased a pair of Lucky Brand jeans, size 50, so that the waistband hung down near my kneecaps, in the style that's all the rage with the generation that followed mine—Generation Y, I guess you'd call them.

I wore my new Lucky jeans to a grungy bar on the Arizona State University campus called the Green Room. It's a place where youth who are "on the tip," as they say in the hip-hop vernacular, gather to dig a nationally known DJ trio from Tempe called the Bombshelter.

"Do I look all right in these jeans?" I asked my friend Tom.

"Well," he replied, "I think you'd look better if you'd worn boxers underneath instead."

"Instead of the Speedo?"

"Yeah, boxers are where it's at," Tom said.

Tom's reaction convinced me my style experiment had failed. I didn't look hip. I looked like what I was—a late-twentysomething (read: old) guy with hairy thighs and a denim tent wrapped around his knees.

I invited Tom out because, unlike me, he still looked young enough to pass for a college student and, again unlike me, he'd been to the Green Room before. Tom was my intermediary.

Out on the dance floor, several impossibly limber kids were break-dancing to the primal beats furnished by the Bombshelter. Break-dancing. Geez, I remember when that craze originated. Parachute pants. Members Only jackets. The whole ridiculous package.

The way the new-school dancers at the Green Room



Illustration by Joe Goebel

moved seemed spastic and unnatural, yet completely in concert with the music, like choreographed epileptic seizures.

It amazed me that they could contort, twist and hurl their bodies around so violently and not require hospitalization. Hell, my neck was killing me simply from executing my one and only dance move—bobbing my head up and down.

Rapt in the throes of Bombshelter-induced juvenility, however, I gave it a go with a friendlier-looking gal.

"What's your major?" I stammered.

"Psychology," she said without looking at me.

"Oh."

That intriguing exchange was followed by several awkward minutes of non-communication in which I ineptly bobbed my head and twiddled my thumbs.

"College is great, huh?" I finally said.

She replied, "You can remember that far back?"

I wanted to slink away and hide—inside my jeans, perhaps. Instead, I went for broke and gave that punk-rock girl a brief history of my college years, figuring that a common experience might help bridge the generation gap and, hopefully, get me into *her* jeans.

To wit: I never "lived" anywhere in college, in the conventional use of the term, but I crashed at a lot of places.

It started in a cozy apartment building just off campus, but unfortunately the place burned down. They had a really nice benefit at a local bar to raise money for everyone who lived there, but since I was just freeloading, I never saw any of that cash.

I also lived in a subsidized way-way-off-campus housing complex for students. At one point, I shared a studio apartment with four other guys. To accommodate five young men in a small studio, we built a makeshift loft that housed two mattresses. Under the loft was a sofa and two more beds.

Housing five guys in a studio was, of course, a clear violation of the rules. In order to avoid being caught by the university brass or the property manager, we always kept the windows shut and the blinds closed. It stunk like hell in that place, and it most certainly was a fire hazard, but hey, it was home.

Rent: \$75 per man.

While living in this arrangement, I ran for student-body president and lost. I protested on general principle and soon after was suspended from school for insubordination. I subsequently left the housing complex. I'd always leave the places, but I never left the lifestyle behind.

For example, most nights seemed to involve some sort of fight in or around a fraternity party, followed by the nagging thought that maybe I started it. These nagging doubts were sometimes fueled by friends who recalled that I had indeed either started it directly or had become so obnoxious that they themselves wanted to pistol-whip me.

Often I'd slip and fall outside a bar after last call, which explained the ever-present welts on my shoulders and back. If I was with a girl, I'd usually do a precautionary vomit in the men's room just to avoid any ugly incidents when I got her home.

And they say chivalry is dead.

Finally, when I peeled myself off the floor after a hard night, I'd put full faith in the Prayer of the Eternally Wasted: Dear God, please let there be enough cash in my jeans to purchase at least one Snapple.

Then I graduated.

"So, what's college been like for you so far," I asked the girl, grinning and bobbing.

She stared at me incredulously for a moment, then pivoted and marched away in a huff.

"What happened with that one?" Tom asked as he sidled up to me at the bar.

"That one?" I said, slugging back a Rolling Rock. "Ah, she didn't like my jeans." ●

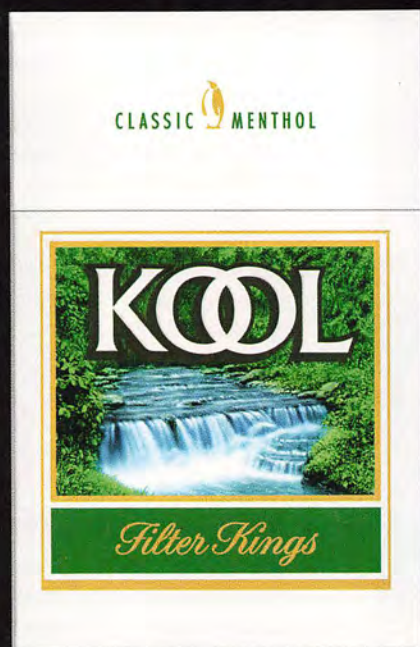
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POSTCARD TO THE EDGE



Route 66 Roulette

“Route 66 is the mother road...”

—John Steinbeck

Hobson: My desire to travel the “Mother Road of America” materialized during a recent conversation with my grandfather. He was reminiscing about traveling the old road, hitchhiking and train-hopping along from Missouri to California back in the late '20s. He recalled with a chuckle the time he and a buddy were locked in a reefer car on a train and nearly froze to death.

His sense of nostalgia struck a chord in me. I wanted to explore Route 66 and create a few memories

of my own on this legendary stretch of U.S. highway that links the Midwest to the West, starting in Chicago, heading through the Southwest and ultimately ending up at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, California. The road was immortalized by John Steinbeck's 1939 novel “The Grapes of Wrath,” which told the story of one family's escape from the Dust Bowl to California, and by the 1960s' TV show “Route 66.” For three seasons, actors Martin Milner and George Maharis drove their Corvette (a new one every year, courtesy of the friendly sponsors at Chevrolet) to places not only on the Route, but locations all over the country such as Montana (must

have been one hell of a long off-ramp).

Today, Route 66 has been replaced mostly by interstates, but its history lives on in the imaginations of those early travelers who loaded the kids into the family car and headed out for California.

Not wanting to make such a long drive alone, I called a long-time buddy of mine, Eric Geller. Geller and I have been on many road trips over the years, and I thought he would dig the history of Route 66. I was close.

“Give me a break, Matt Lauer” was Geller's first reaction. “The only way I'll go along on this trip is if we can also stop at casinos along the way. I could probably stomach the 66 nostalgia if we mix in some gambling and carousing.”

Our plan was to pick up a car in Chicago and head west along the new highways that paralleled the old 66. Along the way, we'd check out those most modern of highway accessories: casinos. We'd hit as many of them as we could, drop a few bucks and have a good time. Literally, we'd roll the dice.

“Well, if you ever plan to motor west.../Get your kicks on Route 66.”

—Bobby Troup

Geller: Chicago is one of my favorite big cities in America. It's got all the excitement of New York without the smell. I arrived the night before Hobson was due and used the time check out Rush Street, a tourist spot that's always good for some action. I popped into the Tavern on Rush and proceeded to make nice with every girl I could. Road Tip No. 1: It's amazing how easy it is to get women to talk to you when they think you're writing a story for a national publication—especially when you really are. If I'd known this angle would be so successful, I would have become a journalist a long time ago—or at least I would have said I was. I hit it off with one particular lady, and while I'd love to reveal the details of our lurid night, I only lie about women to Hobson.

Casino hopping on the Mother Road By Chris Hobson and Eric Geller

Hobson: When I arrived in Chicago the following day, I headed straight for our hotel's garage to locate the car we'd arranged for. What else would you drive on Route 66 for seven days? A brand-new bright-yellow Corvette convertible loaned to us by the good people at Chevrolet's public relations office. It seems they also are attracted to the idea of national publication, and who are we to break with tradition?

Geller: In 38-degree weather, Hobson showed up at Mike Ditka's restaurant, where we had agreed to meet, wearing Bermuda shorts, a Hawaiian T-shirt and a camera draped around his neck. If it wasn't for the Corvette he drove up in, he would've looked like a complete geek. The 'Vette helped him look like only a partial geek.

**"Well, it winds from
Chicago to L.A./
More than 2000 miles
all the way."**

—Bobby Troup

Hobson: I woke up early the next day eager to hit the stretch of 66 that runs between Chicago and St. Louis. The thought of stumbling across ramshackle buildings and "old timers" along the way had me pumped. We hit the road after breakfast, and shortly outside of Chicago we encountered Joliet, home of the Joliet State Penitentiary. Not wanting to find out what lies beyond the barbed wire, I slowed to the legal speed limit as we passed. Not too far past the Pen,

Geller spotted a billboard for the Empress Casino.

Geller: The Empress is an ancient-Egyptian-themed riverboat casino on the Des Plaines River in Joliet. The exterior is decorated with obelisks and pharaohs; the interior is decorated with craps and black-jack tables. We stopped, and I made a beeline for a black-jack table and laid down a few crisp twenties.

Hobson: Lacking the requisite *cajones* to gamble like Geller, I was content to spend a couple of hours betting \$5 and \$10 a pop at a craps table. My strategy netted me \$32 for the day.

Geller, on the other hand, got his ass handed to him. When I approached him to leave



the Empress, he looked as if he'd been pancaked by a couple of linebackers.

Geller: I had to nearly tear Hobson away from the craps tables. I think he may have a problem. I, on the other hand, had not forgotten our obligation to the Route 66 story and was ready to leave. I'd take the Mother Road over that mother of a black-jack dealer any time.

Hobson: I was happy to take my modest profit, gas up the 'Vette and hit the road again. I wanted to put some real miles behind us—besides, cruising in that car was a much bigger rush than playing craps. We followed the Route through several small farm towns in Illinois and stopped at a drugstore in Chenoa to get some film for my camera. When we told druggist about the story we were writing, he got all excited and introduced us to his family, gave us postcards and showed us a chunk of Route 66 he had mounted on a plaque. This road does something to people.

"Well, goes from Missouri down through St. Louie..."

—Bobby Troup

Geller: We made it to St. Louis, where I just happen to have grown up. I took Hobson around to my favorite old haunts, and then we met up with some of my old pals in a hip part of town called The Loop. My friends were pretty impressed with my new car. I downplayed it, "Oh, it's OK, but it's a little light on trunk space." My folks showed up for dinner.

Hobson: Geller's parents were cool enough, so I'm not sure where things went wrong in his development. I think he ate a few too many Magic Rocks and Sea Monkeys as a kid.

Geller: After reliving my youth, it was off to St. Louis' riverboat casinos. First up was the Admiral. Until the '80s, the Admiral was a popular destination for family outings, concerts and dance cruises. I have fond memories of being on the boat for my sister's dance recitals, so I was initially disappointed to find out that it had been turned into a gambling hall. Then I met a couple of suckers at a poker table. They were two loud mouths from Cleveland—big Browns fans—and they played cards like an expansion team. I sent the dog pound away with their tails between their legs and was gathering up my winnings when Hobson decided to join

the game. Ahh, a fresh sucker.

Hobson: I quickly learned that the professional poker game is much more unforgiving than the home version I'm used to, so at the next two casinos we

hit, Harrahs and Players Island, I stuck to the craps tables.

Geller: We had a great time getting plastered and rolling dice. Harrahs had the most Vegas-like feel of all the casinos we stopped at on this trip. Or maybe we were just too wasted to know the difference.

The next morning, Hobson—obviously a lightweight—was unable to drive. I got behind the wheel of the 'Vette, jumped back on the Interstate and punched the car up to 130 mph. It was just the adrenaline rush I needed to start the day. Hobson looked a bit worried. The car handled like, well, a Corvette and had instant power, with plenty to spare. I stopped in Springfield, Missouri, so Hobson could change his diaper.

"For me, Oklahoma was always the heart and soul of Route 66 country."

—Will Rogers

Hobson: We pulled into Tulsa, Oklahoma, at around 2 a.m. without a hotel reservation. The city was hosting a gun show and a religious conference. Who knew Tulsa would be filled with so many gun-toting bible-thumpers? After several "no room at the inn" rejections, we found a small hotel certainly not in contention for the Rand McNally Top 10 Hotels list. I slept with my clothes on.

Geller: We were a bit groggy the next day and thought a visit to an Indian casino would be a good way to elevate our heart rate. We couldn't have been more wrong. The Cherokee Casino was the most sterile, boring gambling hall we'd ever seen. No coins ching-chinging in the slot machine bins (they print out a receipt), no conversation in the bingo parlor, no craps, no black jack, no booze, no nothing, just quiet. This place didn't make us want to gamble, it made us want to nap.

Finally, we did find something to get our heart rate up: A security guard.

Hobson: Apparently, we looked like a couple of terrorists to this wacko securi-





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ty guard named Zeb who nearly busted a vein trying to tell us we couldn't have a camera in the casino. I nearly busted one of my own laughing when the stuttering fool requested back-up and a surveillance camera. After a few minutes of arguing, Zeb "escorted" us out—no doubt just like he'd seen them do in the movies.

Geller and I decided to cut him some slack when we realized his parents were probably from the same side of the family.

Back on the road. Geller had thrown down the gauntlet the day before by hitting 130 mph, and I wagered him the next meal that I could exceed his effort. I reached 128 before encountering a little traffic—and an Oklahoma state trooper. Luckily, the trooper was a few miles up the road when I spotted him, or I might have been writing this from jail. I was only doing 85 in a 75 when we got to him. He was cool and let me off with only a warning. Geller let me off with McDonald's.

"For greatness of beauty, I have never experienced anything like New Mexico."

—D.H. Lawrence

Geller: After Hobson's near miss, I took the wheel and didn't stop until I saw the city lights of Amarillo, Texas. The brightest light of all belonged to the Adult ETC XXX, a department store/entertainment plaza for all your adult needs. It caters mainly to road-stressed truckers in need of a little release. The "highlight" of the evening was a peep-show featuring The Spectacular China. The only positive thing I can say about her is that she had most of her teeth. Thankfully, there was a glass window between us.

Hobson: My favorite stop in Amarillo was the Cadillac Ranch. Located off Route 66 a few miles outside of town, the Ranch consists of 10 Caddies (1948-64) sunk nose-first partially into the ground. Stanley Marsh III, who owns the ranch, is proud of his "art" and welcomes passersby to decorate the cars with graffiti. Geller and I were happy to oblige.

Geller: Next stop Albuquerque,

New Mexico.

We found a hotel and headed to the hip Nob Hill area, where we had a gravy-drenched dinner at the 66 Diner and then waddled across the street to Coaches bar. The joint was pretty happening for a weekday. We scored some points with a couple of girls, but it was all pretty innocent. After a little kissy face in the parking lot, we drove over to the Sandia Casino to see if we might have better luck there. Around 4 a.m., closing time at the Sandia, I realized what little luck I had was used up in Coaches' parking lot.

"Would you get hip to this kindly tip/And go take that California trip/Get your kicks on Route 66."

—Bobby Troup

Geller: The next day we passed through Arizona and many of the towns immortalized in the song "Get Your Kicks on Route 66"—Kingman, Barstow, San Bernadino. We made Los Angeles by nightfall. Our first stop was a kinky fetish club on Santa Monica Boulevard (formerly Route 66), called Sin-A-Matic. If you're in of need a good spanking, this is the place for you. Our next stop was the infamous Sunset Strip. Now this was more like it. Bimmers, Range Rovers

and trashy-looking broads as far as the eye could see. We even had a movie-star sighting. At a club called North, we sat in a booth next to Nicholas Cage.

In a town like L.A., I figured my "writing for a magazine" bit wouldn't carry a lot of weight with the ladies. Hobson, however, had no trouble working his B.S. on a very "weighty" lady. I guess it had been awhile for him, and the road does funny things to a man.

Hobson: Admittedly, she wasn't one of the lollipops you see on "Melrose Place," but she was far more aerodynamic than some of the beasts I've seen Geller with. Somehow, she and I managed to find our way to Santa Monica beach, where we awoke the next morning half-clothed in a life-guard tower, surrounded by a few early beach-goers. Fortunately, Santa Monica Pier, just a few steps away, was the last stop on our trip. I was pretty sure that's where I'd had left the 'Vette with Geller in it.

Geller: As I looked out on the vastness of the Pacific Ocean that morning, I took a moment to reflect on our journey: the towns, the diverse people of this great country, the vanquished ruins of motels and roadside diners, a shared experience between two old friends. The stories we collected on our westward ho, like those of our fathers and our fathers' fathers, would someday be told to our children. I had become a part of Route 66, a child of the Mother Road. And I had lost some cash and got laid. Not a bad trip. •



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KNIGHTSTONE COLLECTIONS

STUFF

A look at some of the coolest toys around By Chris Hobson



Lynne McCready

Sea sight

Scuba diving at night and in caves can be both thrilling and frightening at the same time. You need extra light, but ideally you should have your hands free to fend off hungry marine life. To enable you to do this, Oceanic has developed the first hands-free lighted mask, the Lite Vision, with a convenient one-touch illumination system. The \$119 mask features three miniature green lights (LEDs) mounted on the mask frame that cast a rich, fluorescent glow on underwater objects and creatures. Contact Oceanic at (510) 562-0500 or visit www.oceanicusa.com.

Have VCR, will travel

There's nothing like an endless road trip with a talkative mother-in-law to make you realize that \$399 ain't too much to spend on a traveling VCR. The Video Traveler is a portable entertainment system that lets you watch Pee Wee Herman videos from your car, truck or tractor and tune out mom. Included in the package are a video player, two remote controls, a monitor, a carrying case and the necessary power cords. Call Steelhorse Automotive Products at (800) 533-7704 for more info.



Lynne McCready



Makin' Trax

Like to play with fast cars but can't afford a real one? No sweat. Duratrax rolls out one of the fastest radio-controlled vehicles available on the market, the DTX Nitro Street Force Touring Car. It bolts from the box virtually ready-to-terrorize and is designed to reach speeds up to 50 mph—which means it can outrun that dumpy Grand Lemans you're driving; at \$449, it's also probably worth a bit more. For more information, call (217) 398-6300 or check out www.duratrax.com on the 'Net.



Golf bites

If you're going bowling or to church, you know your shoes will be ill-fitting and uncomfortable. But if your game is golf—and it's as bad as ours is—you'll want something comfy and flexible on your feet when you're pacing the links. Bite Golf blends the style and comfort of a walking shoe with the function of a traditional golf shoe. An oversized outsole offers increased foot stability, and the Bite treads provide greater traction on wet or sloped surfaces. For specs, call (888) BITE-GOLF, or visit www.biteshoes.com.

E-Bike, anyone?

From the guy who created the '64 Mustang comes the hippest new thing in the world of pedal-powered transportation: the E-Bike. That's right, Lee Iacocca, through his new EV Global Motors, is now peddling bikes—and not just any bike. The battery-powered E-Bike allows you to choose your mode of transit, either standard pedal-powered or electric. In electric mode, the bike is capable of a top speed of 15 mph and a range of 20 miles on a single 110-volt charge (a complete recharge takes about four hours). So now when the mood strikes you, or that hill looks a bit too steep, you can just switch on the 400-watt, hub-mounted motor and enjoy the ride—you don't even need a special license. The E-Bike is available in three different models: the Standard (\$995), the Comfort (\$1,145) and the Touring (\$1,295). For more information, check out the E-Bike Web site at www.evglobal.com.



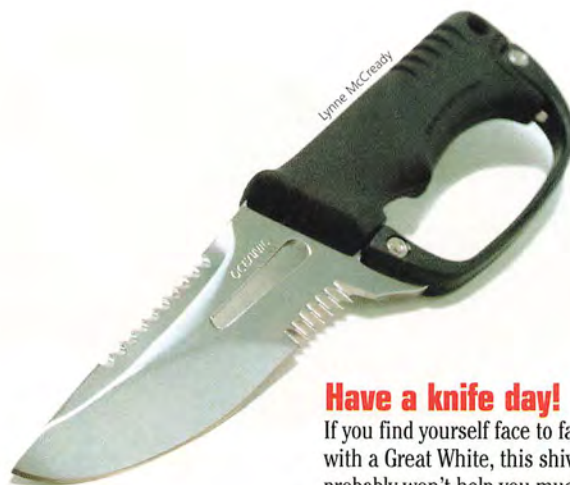
STUFF

Replay it again, Sam

Understanding the need for a product like Replay TV requires just one failed attempt at recording an important show with your VCR. With Replay, simply push one button on the remote control and in seconds you'll be digitally recording your favorite episodes of "Gomer Pyle," "The Love Boat" or "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" to a hard disk. The system uses an online programming guide to allow such one-button idiocy, and we applaud it. By far the coolest feature, though, is its ability to pause live TV. The unit sells for \$599 and is available by calling (877) REPLAY-TV or visiting the company's Web site at www.replaytv.com.



Lynne McCready



Have a knife day!

If you find yourself face to face with a Great White, this shiv probably won't help you much. Against a school of Garibaldies, however, you'll feel like a gladiator. The blade of the Oceanic Tiburon is constructed of a high-quality stainless steel, complete with a serrated edge and sunk into a durable black plastic handle. The Tiburon slips into a handsome, sturdy sheath that straps to your lower leg for easy access. The Tiburon is available at most dive shops for about \$85, or by calling (510) 562-0500. Oceanic's Web site sits at www.oceanicusa.com.



**Until Now, This Was The Fiercest
Import From Japan.**

Lynne McCready

Getting lit

Mag Instruments has a new line of colorful, eye-catching NASCAR-branded flashlights, which is kind of weird considering that Winston Cup cars have no headlights. But hey, the marketing juggernaut powers on! The Mag-Lite Signature Series lights feature top drivers like Tony Stewart, Rusty Wallace and Dale Earnhardt.

Each flashlight is laser engraved with the driver's signature, car number and color scheme. AA battery flashlights retail for around \$20; the 3D size are about \$35. Call (800) 289-6241, or visit www.maglite.com. •

Your pot runneth over

Want to impress your new girlfriend—or, God forbid, her parents—by making dinner for her, but don't know what the hell you're doing and don't have any utensils? Try making pasta (macs 'n' cheese doesn't count). It's cheap, easy and impressive, and with one of these \$49.95 all-in-one Pasta & Sauce Cookers, you can cook, mix and serve the pasta all in the same pot. Add a little red wine and a candle, and your woman will be eating out of your hand—just make sure the pasta has cooled first. To order, call Metro Marketing at (800) 367-0845.

Lynne McCready

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Golf Fitness

By John Ledesma

Many people might consider "golf fitness" to be an oxymoron. They believe you burn more calories sitting at a sewing bee than playing a round of golf. Make no mistake, however,

your body is taxed severely during 18 holes of the sport. Serious golf competitors now realize that being fit gives them an advantage over other players. That's why pro David Duval transformed his Pillsbury Doughboy body into the taut frame of a triathlete. Getting in shape and increasing range of motion can be beneficial to the weekend golfer as well.

"People who don't think golf is a sport usually have never played it," says Kevin Wentz, physical therapist and director of the Competitive Athlete Training Zone in Pasadena, California. "When you analyze a golf swing, it's amazing what's going on there. You're using virtually every muscle in your body, and even though the intensity isn't there all the time, the sheer volume of work you're doing with each swing really adds up quickly."

Wentz, who designs workout programs for athletes of many different sports, trains his clients dynamically in motions that simulate those performed during a sport, rather than isolating specific muscles. According to Wentz, the hips are the physiological focus of everything that drives a golf swing. Therefore, increasing the strength and flexibility of this part of the body is the first thing a golfer should do to enhance his

performance and, more importantly, to avoid injury.

"If you have weakness or stiffness in the hips, your body will automatically compensate for the abnormal mechanical forces that a golf swing calls for with the

next available joint, which is your low back. This is why we see a lot of golfers with low back problems," Wentz says.

The hips and torso are what help players generate power and maintain balance and stability—the key ingredients to striking a golf ball solidly and consistently.

"A good golfer or any athlete who's overweight may be strong, they may be powerful and they may be somewhat agile, but the one limiting factor is that they can't get their body through the ranges of motion that a more fit athlete can," says Wentz. "If you've got more mass and that mass gets outside of your center of gravity, it takes a lot more energy to get it back to your center of gravity. Over time, you're going to start losing it and not be able to get it back. A good athlete who's overweight will be able to compensate

for a certain period of time, but eventually it's going to catch up to him, and he'll lose to an athlete of similar skill who's in better condition."

You can start improving your condition by getting your lazy ass out of the cart and walking the golf course. Next, put into regular practice some of the exercises that Wentz explains on the next page.



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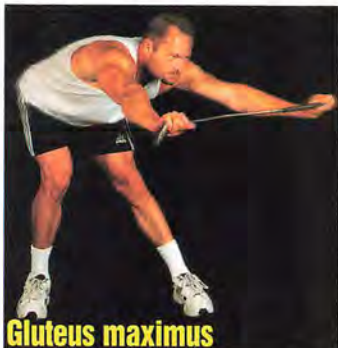
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GOLF STRETCHES

The biggest muscle you have below your waist is your butt, or gluteus maximus. Often during a round of golf, that muscle gets tight—usually over two-foot putts for par—which can cause hip mobility problems.

And obviously your shoulders torque into a lot of strange positions when you swing a golf club. Do the following stretches three times a week and, most importantly, before every round to stay loose and prevent injury.



Gluteus maximus

Assume a solid golf stance and grab a 5-iron with one hand on the clubhead and the other toward the top of the hand grip. Hold the club horizontally in front of you with your arms extended parallel to the ground. Shift most of your weight to your right leg so that your left foot is just resting on the ground. Bend forward and, keeping your left leg straight, squat halfway down until you feel like you're about to fall on your face. Now rotate your upper body as far as you can to the left. Hold this position for 10 seconds and then switch to your left side. Repeat this stretch three times on each side.

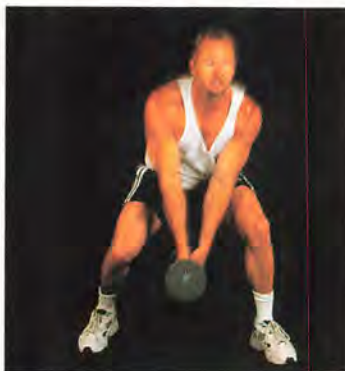


Shoulders

Again take a solid golf stance and hold your 5-iron in the same manner as above. Bend your knees slightly, planting your feet firmly to stabilize your lower body. Rotate your torso and arms to the right as if you were taking a backswing. Now use your left hand

to drive the club as far back as possible pushing your right hand farther upward. Hold for 10 seconds and switch to the forward swing. Repeat this stretch three times on each side. You can move from this stretch into a more active warm up by hitting these positions rapidly.

STRENGTHENING EXERCISES



Golf squat

Take a solid golf stance and hold one 10-pound dumbbell with both hands. Let your arms hang so that the weight is resting in front of your groin. Squat down until the weight is hanging between your knees. Keep your back straight, head up and body weight slightly on your heels. As you stand up, swing the dumbbell vertically, keeping your arms straight, up over your right shoulder. (Pretend you're trying to hurl the weight over your right shoulder.) Now, as you squat again, swing the weight back down between your knees and use the momentum to accelerate the weight back up over your left shoulder. The movement is rapid but controlled and forms a sort of "V" in the air with the weight. You don't want the weight jerking you around. When you become comfortable with the movement, increase the weight. Do 10 reps to each side for three sets. Perform this exercise three times a week.



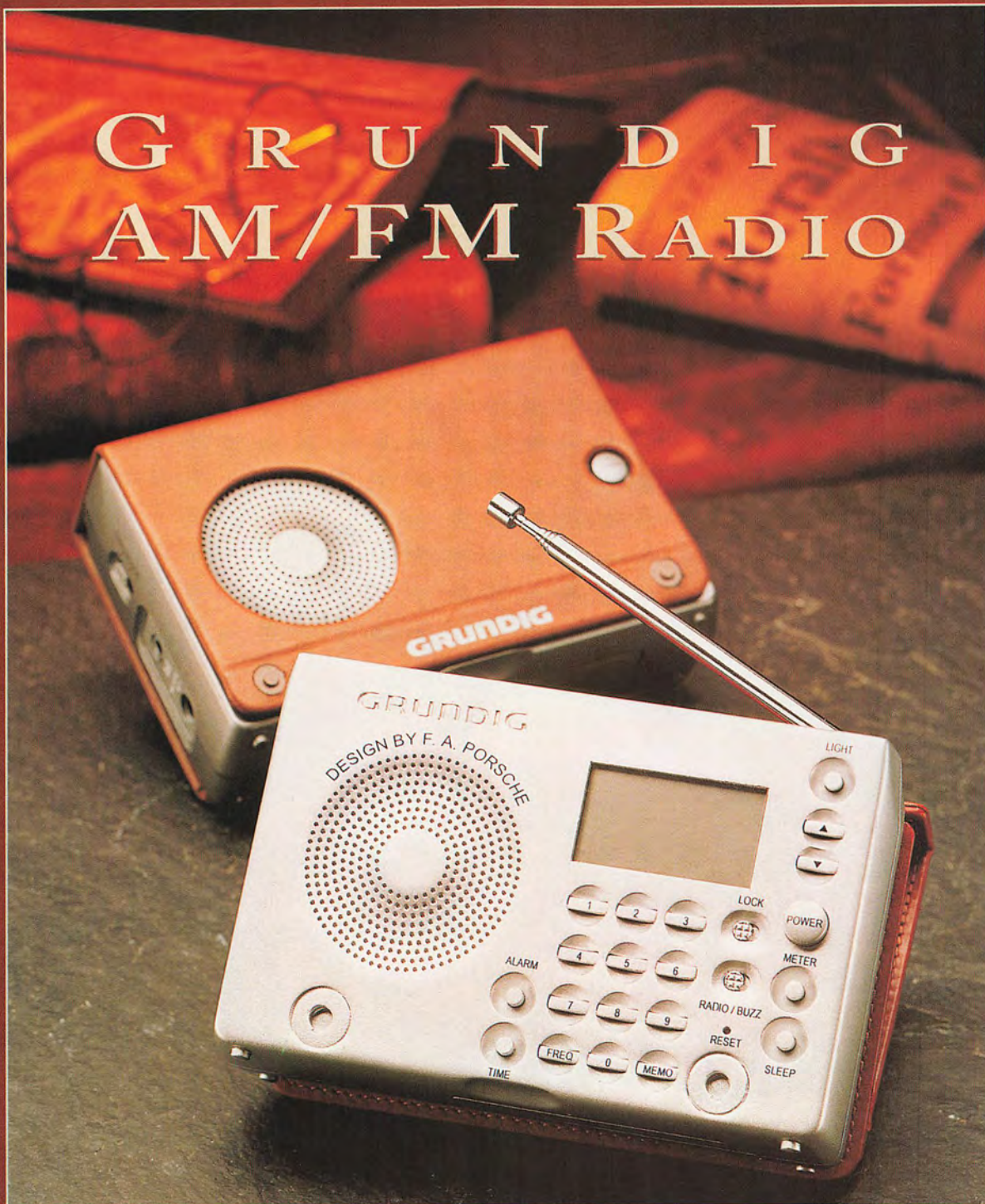
Golf lunge

Hold a light (five pounds) dumbbell in your right hand with your elbow bent as if you were resting the weight on your right shoulder. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Take a step forward with your left leg and hold the position. Now lower into a deep lunge position while extending the weight downward across your body as if you were reaching toward the outside of your left foot. Then, without pausing, stand up and swing the dumbbell up over your right shoulder in sort of a reverse-pitching motion. This is one repetition. Do 10 reps and then switch feet and hands. Do three sets three times a week. ●

To reach the Competitive Athlete Training Zone, call (626) 356-0599.

Photos by J.D. Cuban

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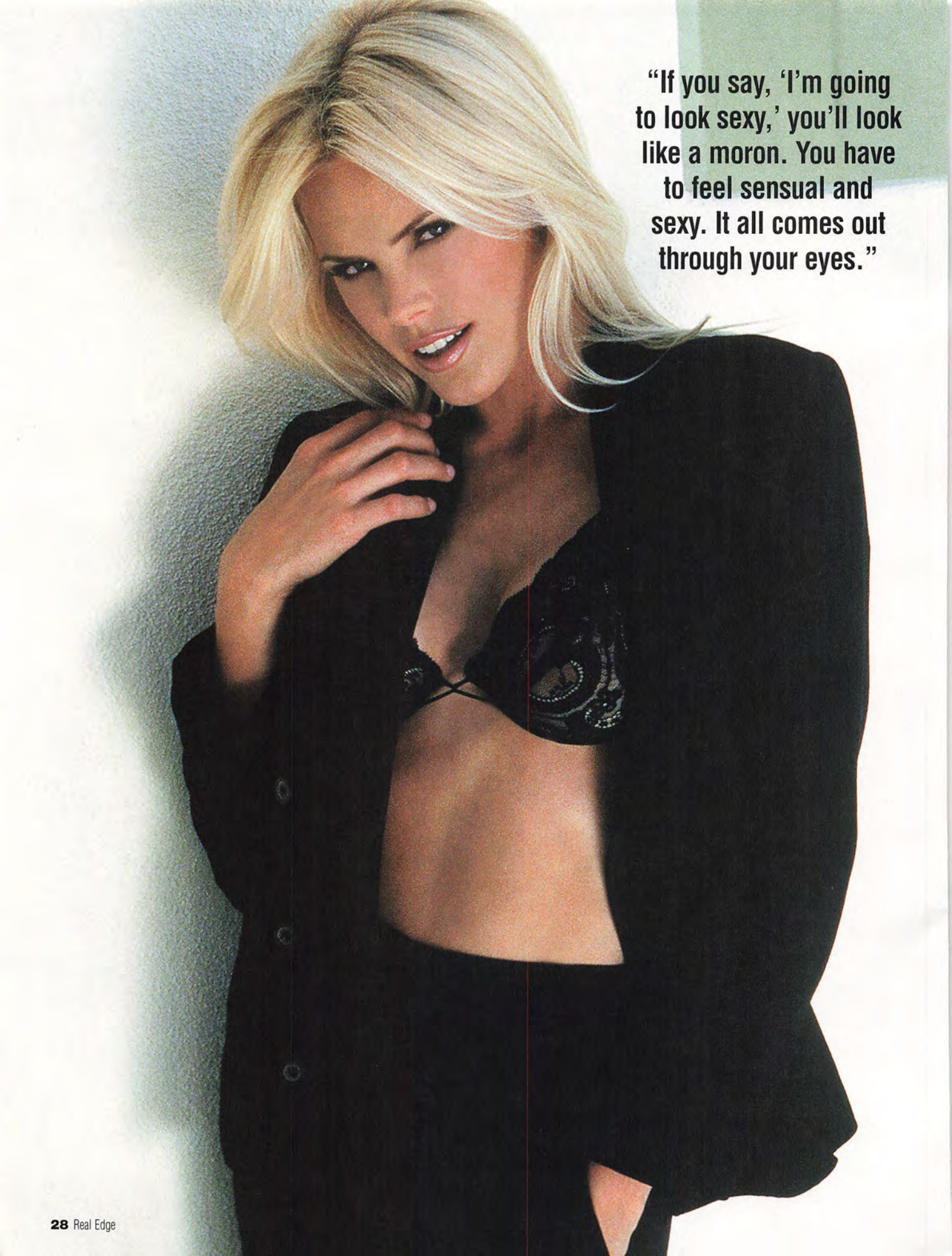
A photograph of a person's legs and feet in a red dress, lying on a patterned rug and pillows. The person is lying on their back, with their legs crossed at the ankles. They are wearing a bright red, short-sleeved dress. The background consists of a patterned rug with a geometric design in shades of brown, tan, and red. There are also several pillows, including one with a white polka-dot pattern and another with a thick, braided rope trim. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a relaxed and intimate atmosphere.

READY FOR THE JUNGLE

Gena Lee Nolin Heats Up the Sheena Legend

By John Pearley Huffman



A blonde woman with long, wavy hair is posing against a white wall. She is wearing a black blazer over a black lace bra. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her right hand is raised near her face.

“If you say, ‘I’m going to look sexy,’ you’ll look like a moron. You have to feel sensual and sexy. It all comes out through your eyes.”

I remember when I first saw her," a photographer friend told me when I mentioned to him that I was going to interview Gena Lee Nolin. "We were casting models for a swimsuit issue of *Car Craft* magazine. It was like, wow, she's way out of our league. We gotta use her." That was back in 1994, and considering hot-rod magazines' stingy budgets, they don't see women who look like Gena Lee Nolin every day.

"I was the most conservative girl I think they ever shot," recalls Nolin of that swimsuit shoot, one of the first jobs she landed after moving to Los Angeles from Las Vegas (and before that, Duluth, Minnesota).

The gig may have been low rung on the show-business ladder, but by the end of 1994, Nolin was waving her hands over major appliances on "The Price Is Right." And in 1995, she was hired to replace Pamela Anderson on "Baywatch." But Planet Hasselhoff wasn't fulfilling for Ms. Nolin, and after four seasons, she quit the show, packed up her husband and new son, and retreated to Arizona without much thought of returning to show business.

Now she's back. Off the beach and into the jungle.

Former "Baywatch" producer Douglas Schwartz has conjured up a re-imagining of the old "Sheena Queen of the Jungle" comic book. Schwartz saw dozens of actresses for the lead role, but Nolin was never far from his mind; she was the Sheena he'd always wanted. He called her, and when the show premieres this fall, Gena will be Sheena.

"Xena has seniority. I've got to prove myself before I kick anyone's butt," Nolin says of the comparisons being drawn between her new character and the popular Xena: Warrior Princess. "Sheena's vulnerable, soft and very tough. An overall sexy woman."

This isn't the first time Sheena has made it to the screen. In the 1950s, Irish McCalla played the female Tarzan in the "Sheena, Queen of the Jungle" TV series, and in the '80s, Tanya Roberts brought the character back in a truly insufferable movie called "Sheena." Nolin's series omits the "Queen of the Jungle" part of the title and picks up the in-on-the-joke tone defined by other first-run syndicated series like "V.I.P." and, yes, "Xena: Warrior Princess."

With institutions like Bob Barker ("A very, very sexy man. Even today, he's that," says Nolin) and David Hasselhoff around ("Let's face it, he's a very pretty guy"), Nolin's duties on her previous series were supporting roles. In this new series, however, the camera will be on her almost all the time. "It's scary to carry a show, to have that responsibility," Nolin admits. "But in order to have any kind of success, you have to be willing to fail."

At 28, Nolin is ready for the burden and is focused on making sure all goes as well as possible. She's working with a personal trainer, but wants "to keep myself lean and slim—I want to keep it very feminine. I'm learning to fight and am working with an animal trainer so I'm at ease with the animals."

With "Sheena" shooting at the Disney studios in Florida, Nolin had to relocate her family from Arizona for at least the months it will take to shoot the first year's guaranteed 22 episodes. They're not letting the house in Arizona go, however.

"I'm looking at this show very optimistically," says Nolin. "But realistically, after 22 episodes, we may be gone. If that's the case, I want to have our life and what we had before. But for whatever it's worth in this lifetime, I'm in show business." •

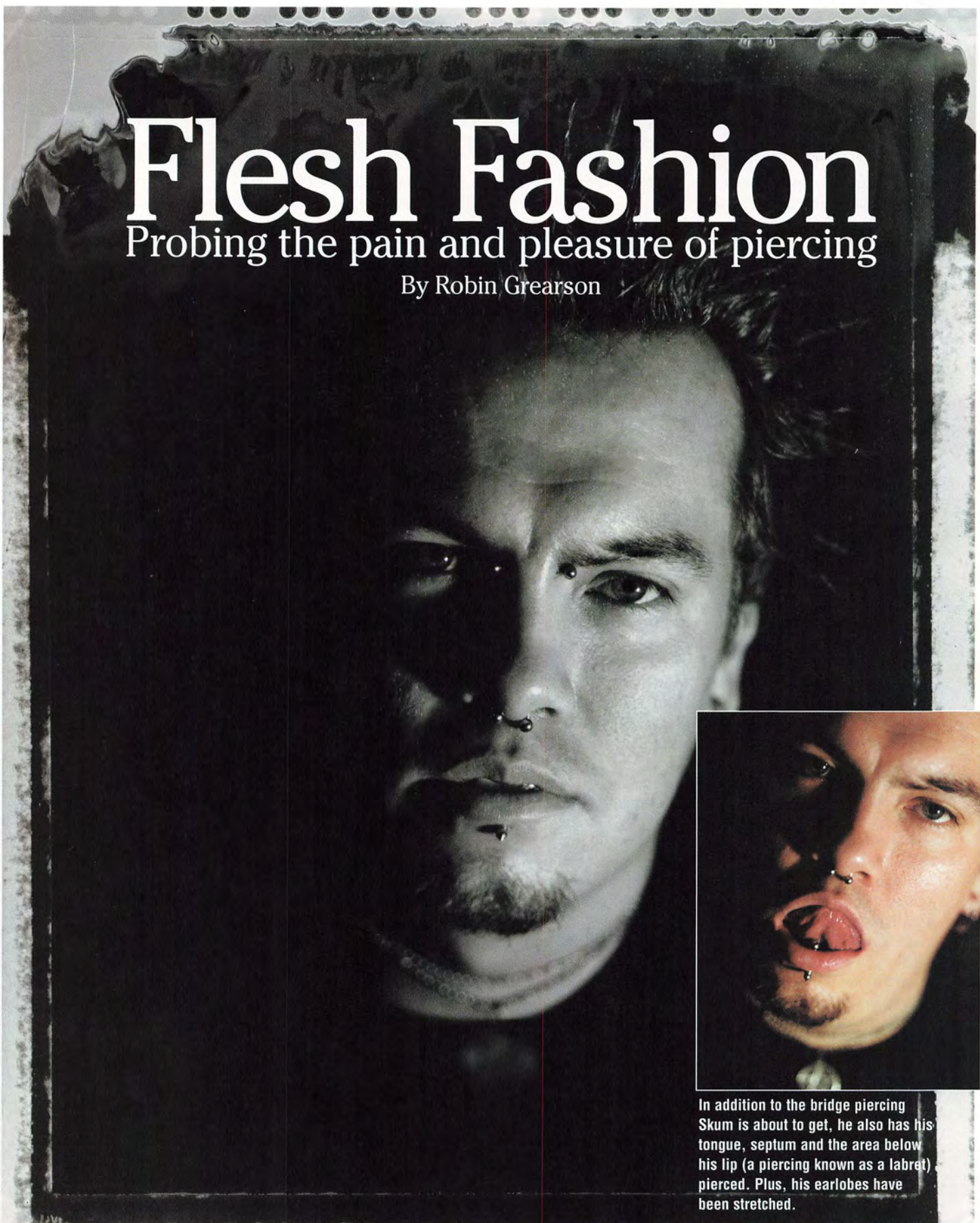
"Sheena's vulnerable, soft and very tough, an overall sexy woman."



Flesh Fashion

Probing the pain and pleasure of piercing

By Robin Grearson



In addition to the bridge piercing Skum is about to get, he also has his tongue, septum and the area below his lip (a piercing known as a labret) pierced. Plus, his earlobes have been stretched.



"I just got my penis pierced. Wanna see?"

When you hear those words, propriety and modesty just don't apply. Much like when a pal gets a new car, you all gather around and check it out. So we did. Our pal Jamie pulled down his pants, and there it was. A gleaming ring of surgical steel pierced straight through the head of his penis. It was still bleeding—all over his white briefs.

The nightclub where Jamie and I worked featured on-site piercing one night, and he went for it. Did it hurt? "It was the most excruciating pain I've ever felt," Jamie told four female staffers while displaying his newly adorned member. Ten minutes later he returned, beaming, to announce,

"I've gotta pee, come watch!" We all followed him to the bathroom and giddily watched as he dribbled in three directions all over the seat—a permanent drawback to the Prince Albert piercing, as it's known.

The next day, I called friend and *Real Edge* executive editor John Pearley Huffman about a travel story I was working on. When I mentioned the events of the previous night in passing, John had a few questions. "Why would anyone do that?!" he shrieked as I dropped the phone. It was as if someone had pierced Johnny Junior.

Huffman's screams quickly illustrated that the concept of a "normal day" is, in fact, exquisitely relative.

"You want me to write about body

piercing?" I asked. "OK, I'll talk to Skum, the guy who pierced my navel."

Relative indeed.

So, why *would* anyone do that?

Several legends detailing the history of the Prince Albert are circulating on the Web. One plausible version goes like this: In Queen Victoria's day, tight trousers were the rage. To avoid the unsightly bulge inherent of the style, hubby Prince Albert had a ring, called a dressing ring, poked through his penis so that a hook inside the tight trousers would hold his royal scepter to the right or left side, out of sight. That's it. This tale highlights fashion as the culprit. And that's hardly incredulous. Humans have always traded pain for fashion. Think women fork over hundreds of dollars for stilettos because they're so comfortable? Think again. A barbell through the tongue is simply the ever higher price many will now pay.

And piercing isn't just for Dennis Rodman anymore. Even squeaky-clean Britney Spears has endured the needle. (She sports a navel ring.) Los Angeles piercer Skum Love reports that many of his clients are out-of-towners who want souvenirs that last longer than a star map.

But although the pages of *People* may be rife with barbell-adorned millionaires, many, many more people have piercings that are never seen in public. These below-the-waist piercings, as they're called, such as the popular Prince Albert and other genital piercings for men (clothing designers no longer force men to hide their bulges) and women, have much more to do with sexual gratification than any mere fashion accoutrement.

Here's the rub

There are at least 7 genital piercings for women, 11 for men. The Prince Albert is rumored to increase the piercee's pleasure by the power of four. Piercing sensitive nipples rewards men and women with perpetually heightened arousal, as the nipple sustains a permanently erect state. A woman's clitoris can be pierced either horizontally or vertically. And you've likely pondered the promise of a shiny tongue stud

Matt Robinson pierced the bridge of Skum's nose while we watched. He and Skum told us that many people feel that their energy is out of balance when piercings aren't symmetrical. He also said that what we didn't hear as he pierced Skum's bridge was the crunching sound it made.



According to Skum, piercees feel a jolt of adrenaline during a piercing. Anticipating this rush, Skum grew increasingly hyper, then, just before the needle went through his skin, his body grew tense and then froze in submission.



Matt put the barbell's shaft through the path made by the needle, then screwed on the ends. Just after the piercing, Skum's eyes seem glazed over, as the procedure has produced a temporary high. Check out the first picture for a before-and-after comparison.

If you want to get pierced

Piercers generally serve an apprenticeship to learn their craft. They should receive training in physiology, prevention of blood-borne disease, first aid and other health topics. Skum, who's been piercing for about six years, offers these tips.

1. Be sure you want it. Can you live with this rather permanent choice? Forget trendiness and do it for your gratification only. As for genital piercings, "It's your body, but if you're sharing it with someone else, ask if that person would like that piercing too." You'd hardly want to discover afterward that your partner won't touch you because of your new piercing. One of them would have to go.
2. Be safe. Make sure the piercing shop is clean and the equipment is sterilized. "A shop should post the safety guidelines it follows, and customers should be permitted to see all of the procedures being followed." Further resources on getting pierced safely appear on the facing page.
3. Trust your piercer. View his or her portfolio. Make sure your piercer has experience in the type of piercing you'd like. Ask a lot of questions. In fact, call your piercer at any time, before or after the procedure, if you have any questions.

to alter forever the joys of oral sex.

As if all that weren't reward enough, there seems to be a social payoff too. We of the Darwinian paradigm worship those who endure pain as superior beings. After Jamie had gingerly put away his new toy, he went to tell his fellow men. The tale of horrific pain he'd shared with the girls just 10 minutes earlier metamorphosed into "It really wasn't that bad." Each man involuntarily recoiled and seemed simultaneously humbled before him. Jamie grew stronger, braver and more virile within minutes. As a tribe, we would have unanimously elected him chief on the spot.

Can you pierce anything?

It seems nothing is unpierceable. Your neck and throat, your wrist, your fingers, even your ankle, could provide new home for a barbell or a ring. Having these sites pierced successfully, however, depends on a client's body type as well as the piercer's level of experience. For example, some extremely competent piercers won't undertake a female genital piercing called the triangle, in which jewelry penetrates tissue deep in the clitoral shaft.

Skum says he refuses to pierce certain areas because "they're just plain stupid." For example, some devotees insist on piercing the webbing between the thumb and forefinger. "The Body Art Book" by Jean-Chris Miller cites the potential risks of damaging a nerve in this sensitive area, but Skum cites a more practical stupidity factor: It tears easily. Rounding out Skum's Worst Piercing Sites list are the uvula and the webbing of the upper lip. What's the uvula? It's that dangly thingy in your throat. Although it may not seem so, the uvula has a physiological *raison d'être* and doesn't seem like a good place to hang jewelry.

Is piercing dangerous?

Yes. Poking any hole in your body carries its share of risks, such as infection and scarring. And the American



Navel piercings take a long time to heal, partly because they are irritated by frequent contact with clothing. Rachel Greenberg (above) had to wait a year to get all four of the navel rings she wanted. She added the tattoo afterward to complete the look. Why four? "Because everyone had one."

Dental Association has called oral piercing a public health hazard. In a 1998 press release, Gary C. Armitage, DDS, chairperson of the ADA's Council on Scientific Affairs, said that oral piercing (which includes the cheek, lips and tongue) poses risks including "infection because of vast amounts of bacteria in the mouth, and [oral piercing] may cause airway obstruction because of swelling." Chipped teeth (which can require a root canal or crowns to fix) and problems with chewing and speaking are also listed as possible complications.

The Association of Professional Piercers, however, calls this "sensationalized" and has published a different opinion. "When performed by a skilled and experienced professional using appropriate, sterile, disposable instruments, the risks are minimal and the procedure is instantaneous and essentially painless." Further, according to APP, "Tongue and other oral piercings heal extremely quickly and uneventfully when all aspects are handled according to accepted practice." The APP's position is that proper precautions "bring risks of getting and wearing oral piercings to a negligible level."

However, the greatest potential danger of body piercing by far is the possibility of contracting hepatitis B or C or HIV/AIDS. While these are certainly not common side effects, you run this



risk whenever your skin is pierced by any needle or foreign object. The best defense is choosing a shop and a piercer carefully. If you have the slightest doubt about the cleanliness of the environment, run. Fast. The APP has established a set of voluntary safety standards to which all piercers should adhere without exception. (See sidebar "If You Want to Get Pierced.")

A time to heal

Assuming the piercing equipment is safe, "People who get infections don't take care of their piercings and don't listen to their piercer," says Skum. Some piercings can take a year or more to heal. The mind may say yes to fashion, but the body takes longer to adjust to the requisite foreign objects. Skum likens piercing aftercare to caring for a puppy: "If you neglect it, it will die."

Before being pierced, you'll be asked to sign a release form that, in effect, contractually obliges you to listen to your piercer's instructions. For example, when he reminds you that genital piercings, before they're healed, are open wounds, you'll be glad you were warned that you're at greater risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease.

And you may be surprised to learn that if your piercing gets infected, running to a doctor is not necessarily the first thing to do. "Many doctors don't know about piercings; they aren't always the best people to speak with. Always call your piercer first with any questions, and don't listen to anybody else about what cleansers to use or procedures to follow," says Skum. If you need to see a doctor, find one who is "piercing friendly." These doctors tend to understand the healing process specific to piercings better and provide a welcoming, non-judgmental environment.

Yeah, you're placing a lot of trust in someone who hasn't been to medical school. In fact, trust is crucial to the

piercer-piercee relationship. You're trusting him or her to use only sterile instruments and safe procedures and to tell you exactly how to care for your piercing. But most important, they have a needle. In fact, because many people—you know, like, women—trust piercers implicitly with their bodies, Skum has found that "being a body piercer means getting a lot of sex."

And speaking of sex, remember our

buddy Jamie, who got the Prince Albert piercing? His piercer told him to wait eight weeks before testing the waters. And so, on day 56, Jamie reported to work giggling uncontrollably. "I had a lot of catching up to do," he gushed, jumping up and down. Did it pack the promised punch? Did his wife like it? He didn't bother to blush. "We did it five times!" You probably don't need help imagining the demonstration he gave. ●

For more information:

Consult a reputable piercing shop or the Internet for information when considering a piercing. At the minimum, read the Piercee's Bill of Rights (published by the APP; visit www.safepiercing.org/billofrights.html), which outlines your rights as a client, and the Basic 10 (also published by the APP; visit www.bme.freeq.com/pierce/basic10.html), which outlines a piercer's and shop's promise to provide a safe, clean environment.

Piercing Amie



Skum demonstrates proper technique on Amie Borba, a freelance makeup artist who volunteered to have her nipple pierced. First, he scrubs his hands and cleans the nipple area. He explains the procedure and answers any questions she has. He helps her relax by asking her to take a few deep breaths. His equipment—the needle, jewelry, forceps, antiseptic ointment, sterilizing cloths, pliers and latex gloves—was already prepared.

"So, what kind of pain are we talking about, anyway?" Amie asked to no one in particular. Both Skum and his former apprentice, Matt Robinson, said the nipples were their most painful piercings. Amie didn't seem concerned. Aren't you worried it'll hurt? "I like pain," she shrugged.

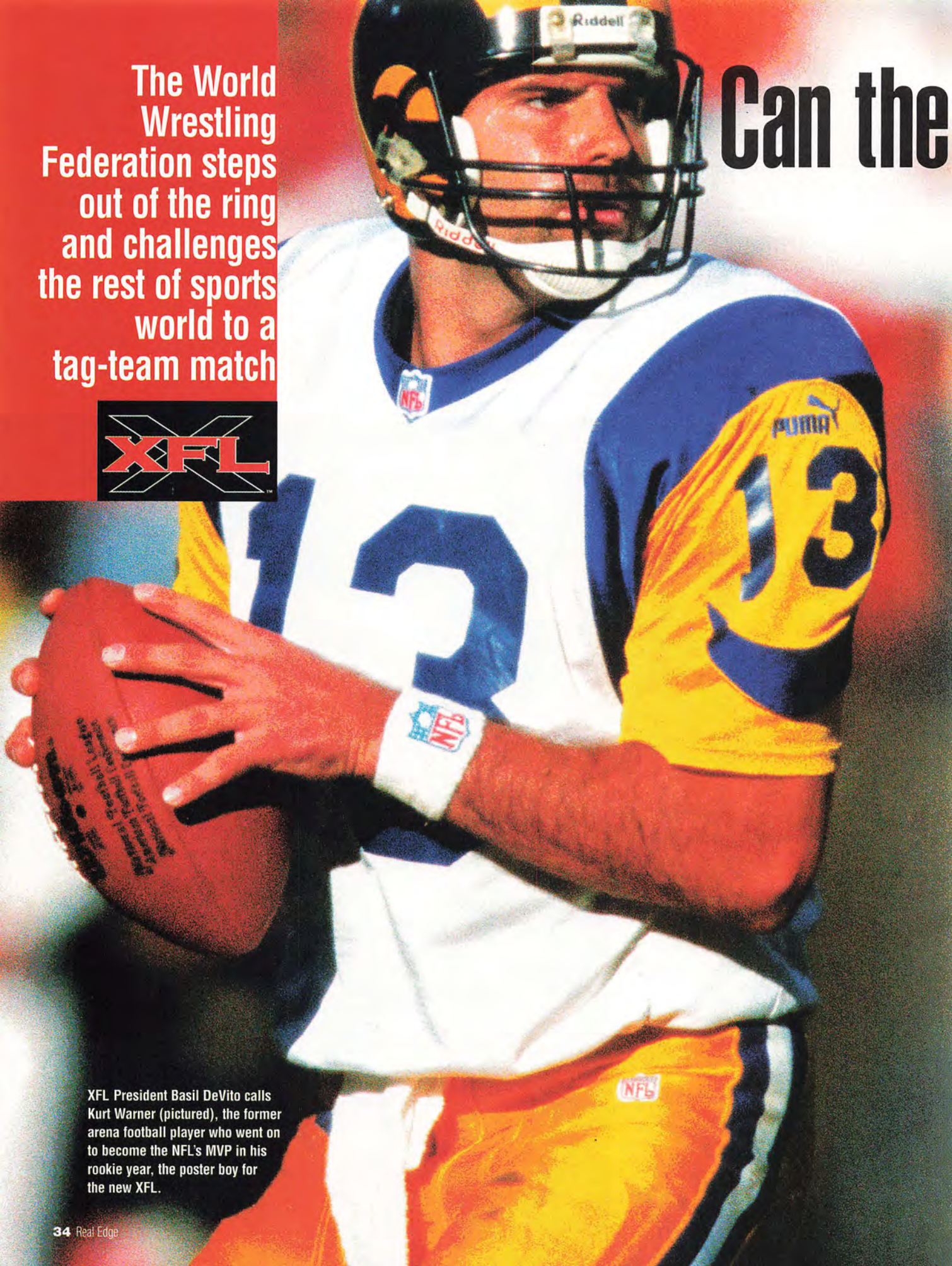
Skum marks the points of the needle's entry and exit with a pen. He clamps the nipple with forceps secured by a rubber band to assist with lining up the needle. Despite the chaos of our photo shoot, Skum tunes us out and focuses on explaining the procedure to Amie. Holding a cork at the exit point to guide the needle, he makes the piercing. Just behind the needle, he inserts the jewelry through the nipple, in this case a 14-gauge surgical steel ring. (The larger the gauge, the smaller the thickness of the ring.) Once the ring is through, he uses pliers to close it, and it's over.

Amie made a face like she'd gotten a paper cut. Afterward, she stood up nonchalantly, said thanks, and went home to finish her laundry.

The World Wrestling Federation steps out of the ring and challenges the rest of sports world to a tag-team match



Can the



XFL President Basil DeVito calls Kurt Warner (pictured), the former arena football player who went on to become the NFL's MVP in his rookie year, the poster boy for the new XFL.

New XFL Bodyslam the NFL?

By Howie Frenzo

Hey, Jabroni! Can you smell what the WWF is cooking up?! If not, you'd better wake up and recognize, because come February 2001, the World Wrestling Federation's new extreme football league, better known as the XFL, may just have all the ingredients needed to change the entire flavor of professional sports as we've known it.

Don't believe it's possible? Well, close your eyes and let us conjure up for you a more vivid image of what may be in store for the not-so-distant future. Imagine a sports world where unsportsmanlike conduct is applauded, where rowdy fans scream non-stop for four quarters, or nine innings, or whatever the case may be. Imagine a sports world where face-paint, tattoos

conference to announce his new baby, "then the XFL is going to be the 'Xtra Fun League.'" With this rallying motto in place, the XFL is hoping to revolutionize the way we watch sports, by giving us, the fans, what we really want—and more.

"Technically speaking, the X doesn't stand for anything," says XFL president Basil DeVito. "It's just a little bit different, but it does look like football. It's attitudinal, just like the WWF."

The WWF TV ratings numbers show that young males in the 18 to 34 age demographic are eating up this type of attitude at a record pace. It's for this reason that NBC has joined McMahon as a 50-50 partner in bringing this type of swagger to Saturday-night TV in February, during a sports season when basketball, baseball and hockey

An upset like that is akin to the 1980 U.S. hockey team of amateurs beating the heavily favored Russian pros. This bodyslam to the NFL gave credence to the thought that today's sports fans may be tiring of the same old games we've been seeing from leagues that were started as long ago as 1876.

The speculation may have begun in the journal *Marketing Management* when it published a story earlier this year questioning whether the four major pro sports had reached the late maturity, or decline, phase of their product's life cycle. The story stated that "It is highly plausible to suggest we are seeing the start of a long-term erosion scenario."

That said, nobody at the XFL is predicting NFL elimination. That would be sheer foolishness. Even with the XFL's

"If the NFL is the 'No Fun League,'" shouts carnival barker/WWF chairman Vince McMahon at the press conference to announce his new baby, "then the XFL is going to be the 'Xtra Fun League.'"

and various other flamboyant accoutrement is worn by the athletes—not just fans—a sports world where John Rucker would be considered p.c.

Now, if you will, imagine a sports world where television brings you close-up images of 250-pound men making beelines for your living room—not via sideline cameras, but rather from players' helmet cams. A world where the coach's crunch-time instructions are beamed into your household word-for-salty-word and where sexy, scantily clad cheerleaders dance up-close-and-personal at your favorite recliner during almost every break of the on-field action.

If you can imagine all that, you'll have a good picture of what the XFL plans to be. The league starts play seven months from now and very well could set the trend for the future of sports. Pretty spicy, huh?

"If the NFL is the 'No Fun League,'" shouts carnival barker/WWF chairman Vince McMahon at the press

typically have been unable to garner regular prime-time network billing.

But then, the NHL doesn't have the WWF's backing, now does it? In the past two years, the world of wrestling has turn our society upside-down and held it there for all to see. Now we're just waiting for the piledrive. After all, we've already witnessed the unbelievable: a former pro wrestler being elected as the governor of Minnesota (Jesse "The Body" Ventura), pro wrestlers publishing two of three best-selling books this year so far (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Mick "Mankind" Foley) and another pro wrestler ("Stone Cold" Steve Austin) ranking second among active athletes in an ESPN sports popularity poll among 12 to 24 year olds.

But it wasn't until the WWF's "Raw Is War" cable series destroyed the NFL's staple Monday Night Football by a shocking 47 percent margin in the coveted 12 to 24 male demographic that network execs really took notice.

emergence, the NFL undoubtedly will continue to have the best players, the best salary structures (with millions paid to its players) and the best fan base. The NFL has the best established core audience in sports today, as each of its 31 teams consistently draw 50,000 to 75,000 fans to stadiums while maintaining Nielsen television ratings in the 9.0 to 27.0 range all season long (capped by a 40-something share for the Super Bowl). The XFL simply is hoping to have the second-best pigskin product out there, aiming to demolish the likes of arena football, the Canadian Football League and NFL Europe.

It's a reasonable goal, considering that XFL players will earn base salaries of \$45,000 for three month's work, with bonuses as high as \$100,000 being given to winning teams, making it the highest-paying football league this side of the NFL. Add to that, projected attendance figures of 20,000 to 25,000 fans per game in the league's eight cities (New York, Los



WWF chairman Vince McMahon (left) with NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol.

Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, Miami, Orlando and two other cities to be named later), then mix in an estimated 5.5 Nielsen rating, which would make it a time-slot winner during prime-time Saturday-night telecasts, and it's easy to see why NBC and XFL execs are excited about combining their cross-promotional resources to lure the young men whom advertisers so desperately want to keep home.

"Arnold Schwarzenegger came to the WWF to promote his last movie, 'In the Ring,'" says DeVito. "If the greatest action-adventure movie star in our lifetime would come to the WWF because he understands WWF's ability to garner the 12 to 34 young male audience core demographic, would we not understand that? Would NBC not understand that? We bring the greatest vehicle to reach young males in the world; NBC brings the NBA and the Olympics. That's a pretty good start.

"We have the benefit of multiple promotional vehicles that reach many demographics on the TV side, on the competitive-sports side and then also on the entertainment side, which is the WWF side."

It is this type of hype that pretty much ensures a built-in audience of young rowdy men, as teens and young adults have been discovering new 21st-century heroes in record numbers on Monday-night WWF telecasts. NBC hopes to capitalize both on this type of star search and on football fans' lingering desire for more of their sport after the Super Bowl has been played on the last Sunday of January.

"I believe that someone like Kurt Warner is the poster child for the XFL," says DeVito, referring to the for-

mer arena-football player who went on to become the NFL's MVP in his rookie year. "But unlike Warner, who had to play all over the world to get discovered, the XFL athlete will be in prime time in major stadiums in America on NBC. I don't think it will take as long in the future for someone with Kurt Warner's talents to be recognized.

"And it's not just Warner. There are a lot of players who fall through the cracks for whatever reason. Just ask one of our advisors, Drew Pearson, who was a free agent with the Cowboys and then spent 12 years with the Cowboys, multiple All-Pro years as a wide receiver and had a Hall of Fame career. They just haven't figured that out yet in the NFL. Drew is another poster boy of the XFL."

Pearson is on the XFL advisory committee for this very reason, among others. Not only does he, through his successful Drew Pearson Marketing firm, bring 15 years of business expertise to the table, but his life story also

"The WWF is 100 percent entertainment, and this will be 100 percent sport. It's going to be smashmouth football."

relates to the plight of the XFL player in that he is one of them.

"If I came along the way the system is nowadays—80 players total going into training camp—there's a good chance Drew Pearson would not have gotten a chance to play in the NFL," says Pearson. "So here's a guy who has All-Pro talent, being considered for the Hall of Fame, and he might not have even gotten a chance to show what he could do in the NFL. With the system the way it is, there are a lot of Drew Pearsons out there, Cliff HARRISES, Benny Barnes. People who have NFL talent, but because of the college they played in, because they don't meet certain NFL criteria, these players won't even get a shot to show what they could do in the NFL."

This kind of better-than-college talent level combined with potentially better-than-pro showmanship is forcing commissioners at all of the major sports leagues to keep one eye trained on the new game in town. NBA Commissioner David Stern, who is a close friend of NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol, was so intrigued by some of the XFL/NBC

innovations that he tried to mandate that all NBA head coaches be microphoned for their games. Stern even threatened his coaches with a \$100,000 fine if they refused to wear the mics, but he eventually backed off that stance when he sensed a mutiny by the entire NBA coaching community.

The XFL won't have such a problem. Their coaches, who'll be signing contracts in the coming months, know up front that they'll have to accommodate the wishes of the parent companies if they want a job in this startup league.

And the coaches won't be the only focus of the sideline action. A good portion of the XFL's TV coverage will feature the cheerleaders/dance teams, with rumors already popping up about what the XFL's cheerleaders will be wearing. As far as we can determine, if the WWF Divas are serving as the standard, then it would be safe to say the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders will soon look overdressed.

"I wish I could tell you what the

women will be doing, but it hasn't been finally determined," says DeVito. "And if it had been determined, I probably wouldn't tell you just to tease you a little. But I've gotta tell you it would be something that *Real Edge* would be putting in its pages. There's no doubt about it. It will be out there."

As will the players, in a different sense. Word is that it will take a lot to draw the unsportsmanlike flag and that brawls may break out during the game à la hockey. No one at the new league publicly supports these theories, but the talk still surfaces. Not that young men are complaining about any of these rumors. In fact, a *Sports Illustrated*-commissioned Harris Research study revealed that this demographic is in favor of this type of play, with 35 percent of them saying they were "more likely" to watch a game "after seeing players act up or get into scuffles," while 16 percent said they weren't.

Trash-talking also could prove to be one of the orders of the day. Wrestling superstar Goldberg (formerly known as Atlanta Falcon defensive lineman Bill

Goldberg) says the origins of football and wrestling smack go hand in hand.

"It's a natural connection," says Goldberg, who performs for World Championship Wrestling, the WWF's rival. "There are so many other players in the NFL who have that wrestling attitude. John Randle, for instance, would be a shoo-in for wrestling, no doubt. He's an individual. He's boisterous, very confident and one hell of an athlete—got a motor in him that never stops. That's the key on the field or in the ring. Entertaining everyone else by entertaining yourself."

DeVito says, "We have always been a vehicle for NFL players to further their careers, whether we had 'Refrigerator' Perry, Jim Covert, Bill Fralic or Lawrence Taylor on WWF events."

While that may be true, DeVito wants to make clear that this in no way means that WWF wrestlers are going to actually play in the football games, even if they, like The Rock, have serious football talent.

"This is football," says DeVito. "Yes, the WWF personality and superstar Rock is a former Canadian Football League player who also had opportunity in the NFL, but No. 1, he couldn't afford to take the paycut, and No. 2, that's not what this is about."

"Will the WWF superstars make cameos and cross-promote the XFL? Of course. But there will be no WWF people as players in XFL. You can write that right on top."

McMahon puts it more succinctly: "The WWF is 100 percent entertainment, and this will be 100 percent sport. It's going to be smashmouth football."

If the product is indeed smashmouth, and if the XFL is indeed successful, one thing is certain: The face of sports will never be the same. ●

XFL Ins & Outs

IN	OUT
XFL	NFL Europe, Canadian Football League, Arena Football
Excessive celebrations	Excessive penalty flags
Headslaps from defensive linemen	Holding by offensive linemen
Passing, with rules encouraging balanced run/pass attacks	Caution, with rules encouraging action on every play
Smashmouth football	Fair catches on punts
Personalities	Uniformity

WCW star and former NFL defensive lineman Bill Goldberg says the connection between football and pro wrestling is natural: "There are so many other players in the NFL who have that wrestling attitude. John Randle (pictured), for instance, would be a shoo-in for wrestling, no doubt. He's an individual. He's boisterous, very confident and one hell of an athlete."



Mia Can Knock You Out

Mas femenina Mia St. John is the
Women's IBC Featherweight
Champion

By Howie Frenzo

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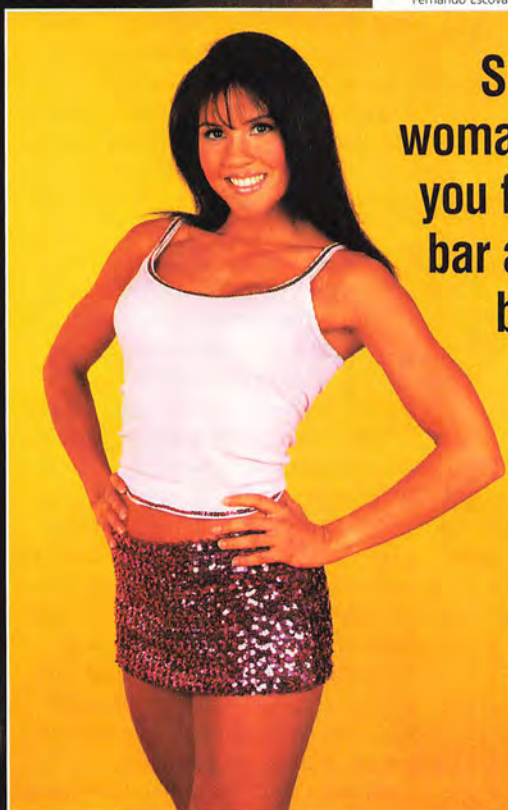
She may be the most beautiful woman in sports today.

She floats like a butterfly, stings like a bee, but, embellishing on Muhammad Ali's poetry, has beautiful wings and is sweet as honey. She has a fitness queen's body, a beauty queen's face and a prom queen's innocent smile. Yet catch her from 10 a.m. to noon on any training day, and her whole being changes from Mama Mia into mini-Mike—as in Tyson. It is then that, right before your eyes, she morphs into a warrior princess who wants nothing more than to rip off her opponent's friggin' head.

Ladies and gentlemen, meet Mia. If you're Mexican, you likely have known her for years as Mia Rosales, the darling Latina boxer who has followed in the Univision

footsteps of Selena and Jennifer Lopez as a Hispanic crossover

She's the type of woman who would make you feel safe in a biker bar and 7 feet tall at a black-tie affair.



star who has become a role model for millions in the nation below the border. If you're American, you probably know her as Mia St. John, who has since won millions of fans while boxing on the undercards of Oscar De La Hoya's pay-per-view fights.

Jay Leno has met her. So too has Conan O'Brien, as well as nearly every other talk-show host in North and South America. They say she's the next big thing, although she's already done the controversial

magazine cover shoots and TV commercials that all big-name celebrities do nowadays. She claims not to be a model, but she appeared on the cover of *Playboy* last November, wearing little more than boxing gloves. And although she doesn't drink beer, she starred in a Miller Lite commercial. Her life is full of contradictions, best exemplified by the obvious: Although she is a boxer, she is a true beauty.

To see St. John in the ring is to love her and fear her at the same time. She possesses a stinging straight right and a nice left hook too, one that effectively penetrates

Icon SMII

most of her opponent's defenses. She has a self-motivation that exceeds all normal limits, as witnessed by the four to five hours she spends training each day. She does road work, weight work and ring work, because, more than just a boxer, she's a fighter at heart. She has trained since age 6, when she first took up Tae Kwon Do as a way to deal with the inner aggression she felt when her father first left

The numbers don't lie. St. John is 17-0. She also measures 35-24-35.



the family. Twenty-seven years later, she's still fighting, dealing with abandonment issues caused this time by the divorce from her first true love, "General Hospital" soap-opera star Kristoff St. John, and the death of her trainer Art Lovett, a father figure who died in her arms in the ring three years ago. Still she fights—in the ring, where thousands of men focus their undivided attention on the hottie wearing boxing gloves, the one fighter who can make men ignore the ring-card girls between rounds.

St. John now calls herself a boxer and a boxer only. Call her a model, and you'll be doing so at your own risk. While most women would take that label as a compliment, she takes it as a five-letter word, an insult to everything she has accomplished in her 24 years of Tae Kwon Do and 3 years of boxing. In that relatively short time in boxing, she has become the IBC Featherweight Champion and the undisputed poster gal for women's boxing, replacing Christy Martin in the role. The secret to her success: She's the beast who can also be the beauty.

What other fighter could actually get away with wearing pink in the ring? What other fighter would be capable of attracting potential sponsors like Revlon by wearing makeup during her ring entrances. What other fighter could win while doing these things?

The numbers don't lie. St. John has a perfect 17-0 record. She also measures 35-24-35 and has a perfect-10 face and perfect 32-tooth smile. Simply put, she's perfect in every numerical way. She's the type of woman who would make you feel safe in a biker bar and 7 feet tall at a black-tie affair.

Ask her about her pre-boxing modeling history—she was hyped as a former *Playboy* model by her promoter Bob Arum long before her recent cover shoot for that magazine—and she'll tell you, "That's something Bob did. I worked for the Playboy agency, but I never posed in the magazine. I just did posters and catalogs, and I never posed nude. But I think people took it as being in the magazine, and [modeling] is where I came from, that was my job. They don't realize I spent my whole life competing in another sport. They think I was a model-turned-boxer, and it makes a good

story and has caught people's attention, but it's really not the way it happened. In the media and entertainment business, people like catchy stories, and to Bob, that was a catchy story—model-turned-boxer. I told people back then, 'Yeah, I did some modeling, but I also did this.' Of course, they went with the catchy story."

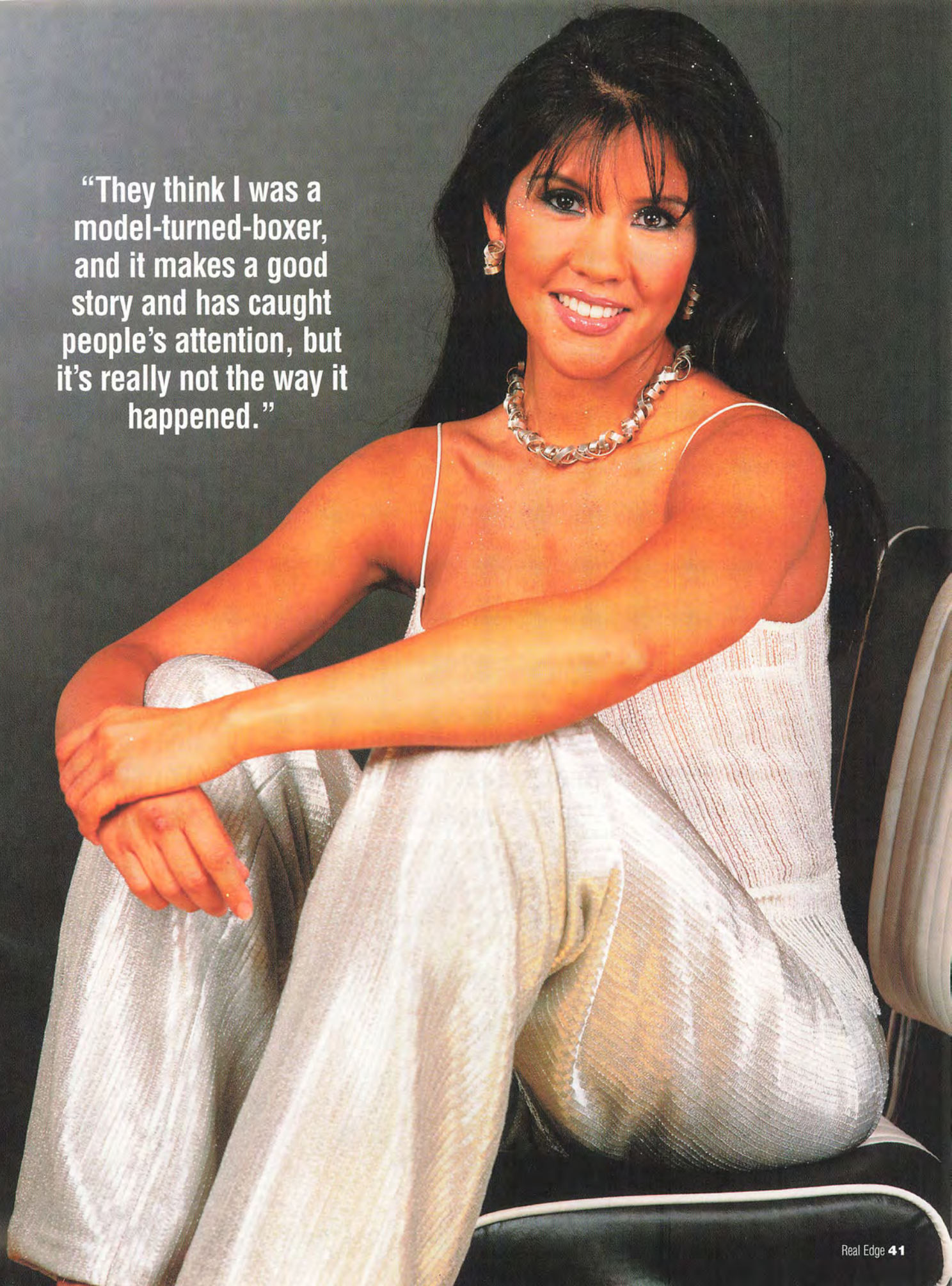
Tell her that she cringes whenever she says "model," and she'll laugh that good laugh of hers and admit that the word is a pet peeve of hers: "I take it as an insult because of my mother and what she taught me. I struggled so hard to be a strong, intelligent woman. I graduated from college, with a psychology degree from Cal State Northridge, because my mother made me. I feel like I wanted to do so much more with my life than just be a model. I don't see anything challenging about being a model. You have a great face. You have the height, the look, so there you are. I don't know. I don't take pride in that. I take pride in what I did in college, spent so many years studying and trying to be a good student. I take pride in working so hard to master a sport, like what I did with Tae Kwon Do, and what I'm trying to do in boxing."

She'll tell you her life story. How her mother, Maria Rosales, married a U.S. Navy officer, and how they settled down in California. After he eventually left the home, her mom moved the family back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico several times. Mia still remembers growing up in Puchipilla, Mexico, where they had to ride a donkey to a river to do their laundry, because their home had no running water or electricity. Her main form of play was venturing over to the sugarcane fields. "My mother wanted a better life," says St. John, "so that's why she brought us back to America."

Her mother also wanted to Americanize the family, so she forbade the kids to speak Spanish at home. Thus, St. John grew up not fully knowing Spanish or English. Everything was a struggle then—from the language, to the culture, to living without a father. Needing an outlet for her frustration, little Mia took up Tae Kwon Do.

It wasn't until a couple of years after her divorce from Kristoff St. John, with whom she had two children, a son Julian, 10, and a daughter

**“They think I was a
model-turned-boxer,
and it makes a good
story and has caught
people’s attention, but
it’s really not the way it
happened.”**



Paris, 8, that she ever thought she could make money with her fists. On a whim, in 1996, she sent a picture and a résumé to boxing promoter Don King. Within days, King responded by setting up a meeting with her. "He told me to turn pro, and then he'd sign me," recalls St. John.

She did, and he did, and they set up their first fight together to occur in Tampa, Florida, on June 21, 1997. The day before that fight, however, St. John's trainer Art Lovett—the man who trained her in a Los Angeles park because, at the time, most boxing gyms in the city wouldn't allow a female fighter to train within their facilities—collapsed and died from cardiac arrest while sparring with her. Despite the trauma, St. John had to go on and fight without Lovett, who had never fully trusted King and had once told her, "The last thing I want would be for me to leave this world and have you stay with Don King."

"That was kind of like, for me, the road to the end of Don King," says St. John. In August 1998, after claiming she was owed thousands of dollars by King, she left him for Arum, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Bob basically made me his girl, his star, like Don did for Christy Martin," says St. John. "And I loved that, because Don King was not interest-

ed in what I had to offer. And I felt he made a big mistake, because the Latinos are boxing, and if they don't have a Latin hero to look up to, they're not gonna look at some *gringa*, Christy Martin. Bob would put me on all the Univision fights, marketing me to the Latin people first because he knew they were the heart of boxing."

She became a star in her own right and one day reached the point where she told her ex-husband that she no longer needed to receive alimony. That, to her, was a turning point in her life.

"Don't get me wrong, we have a great relationship still," says St. John. "But by me doing that, it was liberating for me. Like, I don't need a man in my life. I don't need anybody, I have myself. I bought myself my Mercedes. I bought my mom a car. It's not the feeling of buying those things, it's the independence of being free of a man."

"As a psychology graduate, I've done a lot of analysis on myself. A lot of why I am what I am is because of abandonment issues. My father leaving, my husband leaving, my first trainer dying. Now I'm very independent. I date, but I don't last very long with guys, because I'm so independent. I don't like a man trying to take too much of my time away. Calling me

all the time, 'Hi, honey,' where I'm like, 'Oh, just leave me alone.' I'm happy seeing a guy once a month, if even that. I have so much going on in my life that makes me happy. My kids make me happy, my boxing makes me happy, my mother makes me happy, traveling makes me happy. There are so many things that I do and love, that there's just no room for a man. Yeah, probably a lot of it is a fear of getting close to a man, so I just don't allow it to happen. I keep every man at a distance."

In a recent interview from her home in Calabasas, California, for Univision, the Los Angeles-based, Spanish-language network that helped launch her career years ago, St. John sat ladylike on a stylish purple couch and told the camera crew, "I don't know how to say this. *Las otras pedadoras no les gusto yo. Por que ellas... Por que ellas piensan soy.* How do I say it... They think I'm... I can't even think of a word in English, feminine. Too feminine, I guess. *Mas femenina.*"

What St. John was trying to say is that other female fighters don't like her because she is too feminine. As if that's a bad thing.

Mas femenina. If this is the 21st century breed of female athlete, we'll take *mas femenina* Mia every time. •

"As a psychology graduate, I've done a lot of analysis on myself. A lot of why I am what I am is because of abandonment issues."



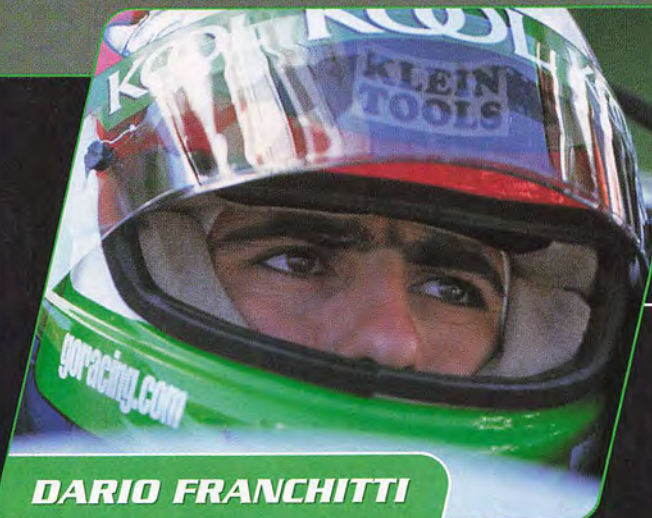
***THIS SEASON FIND OUT
WHY GREEN MEANS GO.***



PAUL TRACY



DARIO FRANCHITTI

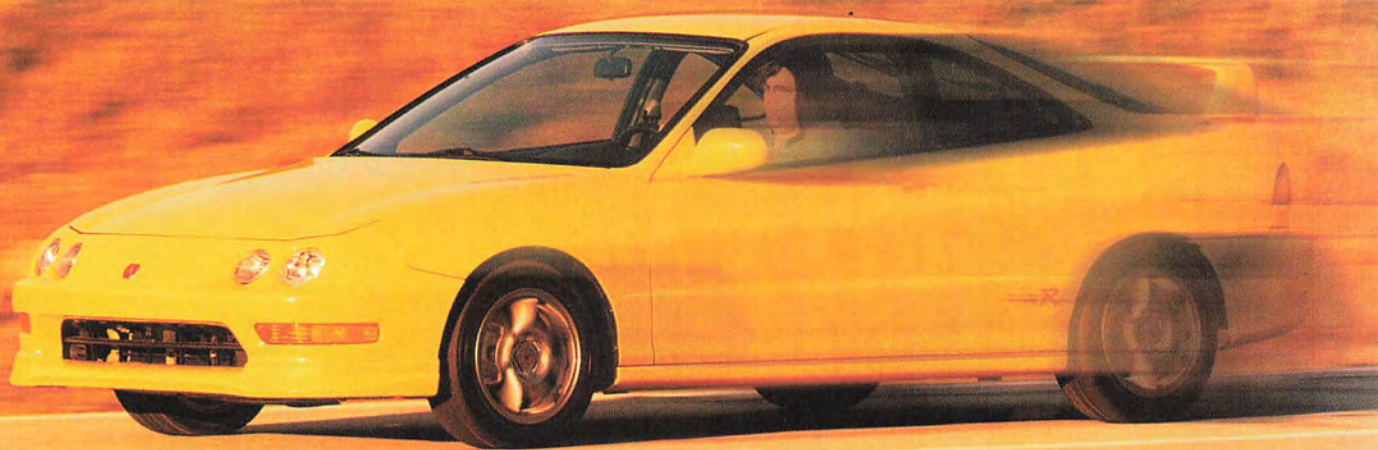


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Big Speed, Little Cars

When you absolutely, positively do not want an SUV

By John Pearley Huffman

What does driving a sport-utility vehicle say about you? Listen to the marketing hype and you'd think it screams "rugged individualist with a sense of adventure."

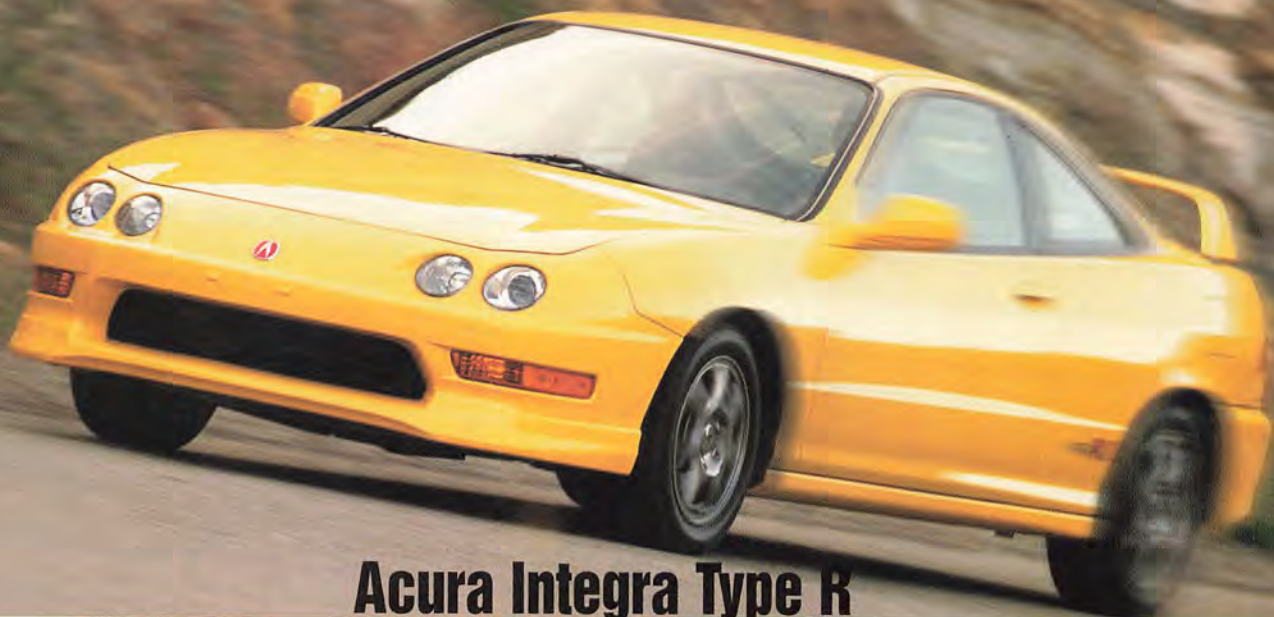
But we all know that what driving an SUV really says is "I'm married with kids, but don't have the balls to admit that I need a minivan." And if you aren't married and don't have kids, why would you want people to think you are?

So you decide to buy a sporty two-door. Now, in an ideal world (the one that seems to be on perpetual back-order), we'd all get Ferraris. But in this less-than-perfect-existence, your desire for a speedy, good-handling two-door is balanced by your need for one that's reliable, useful, affordable, stingy with gas and insurable even if you don't have incriminating photos of Geico's CEO in a barnyard of sin. You need a car like the Honda Civic Si, Acura Integra Type R, Toyota Celica GT-S or Volkswagen GTI 1.8T. Each has a four-cylinder engine, a price tag that someone with good credit and a regular paycheck could handle and a fun factor verging on the ludicrously delirious (or deliriously ludicrous).

The history of small cars with aspirations of speed extends back to the moment the first go-fast goody was bolted onto a Model T. But the real impetus for the movement came with the development the Italian Abarth Fiat 600 back in 1956 and the British Austin Mini-Cooper in 1961. Neither the Italians nor the Brits seem capable of selling reasonably priced cars in the United States, however, so we Americans were deprived of affordable, quick, small cars until Volkswagen brought the Rabbit GTI (a car that had been on sale in Europe since 1976) to these fair shores in 1983. The original GTI's general layout has defined the "hot hatch" category ever since: a fuel-injected overhead-cam engine mounted transversely and driving the front wheels, plus a well-tuned but otherwise rather ordinary all-independent suspension. Multivalve cylinder heads, variable valve timing, turbocharging and vastly more advanced engine electronics have been ladled atop the basic GTI formula, but it's still pretty much the GTI formula.

Over the years, the fortunes of coupes have ebbed and flowed in the marketplace. In the early '90s, it seemed small two-doors were available from virtually every manufacturer. Then the SUV sales tsunami hit, and coupes like the Mazda MX-6, Nissan 240SX and Ford Probe were swept to their extinction. But there are signs of an SUV backlash today, with young drivers rejecting the SUVs their aging, lactose-intolerant parents think of as hip. A return to sleek but attainable cars like the Celica, Civic, Integra and GTI definitely appears to be underway.

With the testers at Edmunds.com generating the numbers, we drove and analyzed the four cars before you on these pages to help you navigate the colorful waters of small cars that go fast. We're not going to help you pay for one, however.



Acura Integra Type R

Raw nerves, awesome performance—and soon to disappear

In the world of small performance cars, the Acura Integra Type R is the alpha male. It's the limited-edition, near-race, barely civilized version of the Integra GS-R that makes the fewest compromises of any front-driver in pursuit of performance today. Want cruise control? Not on the Type R. A sunroof? Pale and pasty is just fine with Acura.

The Type R's heart is, of course, its engine, a 1.8-liter with a 10.6:1 compression ratio that spins with crystal-meth eagerness past its 8,400-rpm redline until it hits a 8,500-rpm fuel cutoff. The results is a staggering 108 horsepower per liter for a total of 195 horsepower. The big engineering trick is Honda's (which makes Acuras, duh) Variable Valve Timing and Lift Electronic Control (VTEC) system, which electronically optimizes the engine's breathing, no matter how

dizzilying it twirls.

But while the Type R yanks plenty of ponies from its hand-polished intake and exhaust ports and 62-millimeter throttle body, it can manage only a mere 130 pound-feet of peak torque at 7,500 rpm. This is an engine that needs to scream to make power. If you're the type of guy who short shifts for maximum mileage, you'll never experience even a drop of this engine's tasty talents.

And this isn't a luxury car. The Type R is on perpetual snarl, and when the VTEC kicks in at 5,700 rpm, the car becomes absolutely rabid. Keeping the engine boiling is a bit of a challenge, however, since the power comes so high; despite having one of the best shifting five-speeds on Earth, the car could use a dozen or more tightly packed gears.

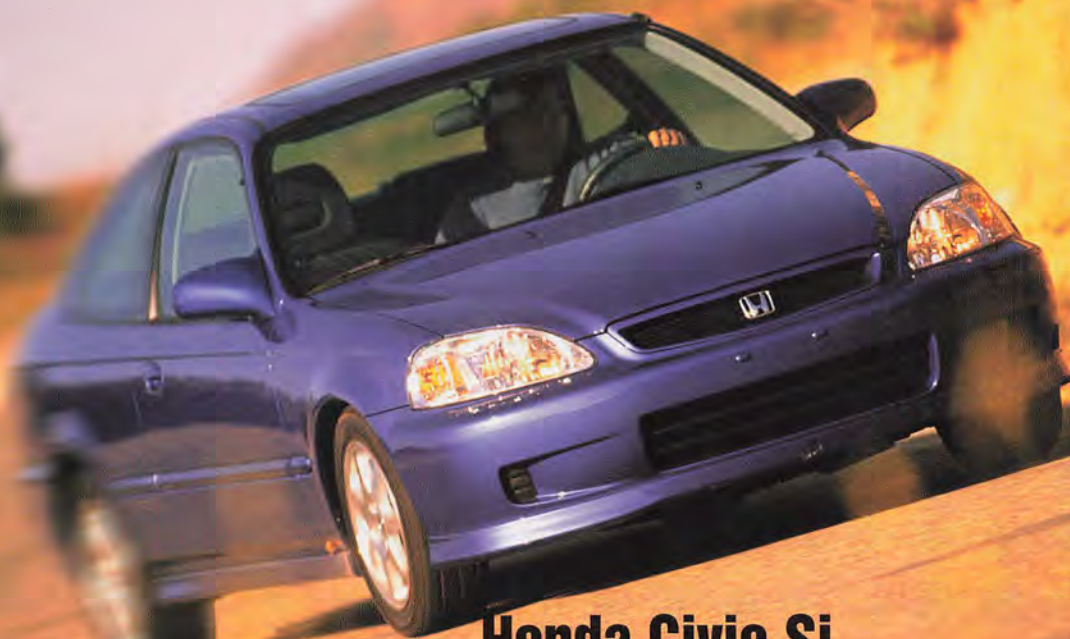
At a feathery 2,600 pounds, the

Type R rips from 0 to 60 mph in 6.7 seconds and gulps down the quarter-mile in just 15.2 seconds at 92.9 mph. And it matches that high-strung muscle with a chassis fortified with a lowered ride height, rock hard bushings, stiff spring, a strut tower bar and aggressive Bridgestone 195/55VR15 RE010. Even though the tire size is modest, this is probably the best-handling front-drive car yet devised, with amazing grip and a neutral feeling perfect for the race track.

The Type R's big-ass, visibility-shrinking rear wing, contoured seats and aluminum knob shifter promise performance, and the car delivers. There's a new Integra on the way soon, and it's unlikely the limited-edition, \$24,350 Type R will carry over. If you can put up with this old platform's archaic elements and you crave unadulterated thrills, this is the stud of small cars.



Tires do more to determine a car's character than any other component. The Integra Type R (A) uses modest-size but hard-compound 195/55VR15 Bridgestone RE010 tires to produce race-car-like adhesion. The Civic Si (B) uses Michelin all-season tires the same size as the Type R's, and it rides better for it. The Celica (C) is the only car here with 16-inch wheels and big 205/50VR16 tires that run quiet. The GTI's shoes (D), 195/65HR15 Michels, are best used as training tires; run them down quick and then bolt on some real treads.



Honda Civic Si

Cheap thrills

While Acura's Integra Type R is the performance leader of the small-car pack, its brother the Honda Civic rules the sales jungle. Go to any high school parking lot, and you'll find it overstuffing with Civic coupes. And of the Civic coupes, the Si swings the biggest performance stick.

The Civic Si is inexpensive (\$17,545), as a Civic should be, but it boasts serious performance creds. Where a pokey single-cam 1.6-liter four lives in other Civics, the Si has a DOHC 1.6-liter 16-valve VTEC motor. It's the same engine that was offered in the departed del Sol semi-roadster, and with its 8,000-rpm redline, it's no muscle-car motor. Nevertheless, even though its skimpy 111-pound-foot torque peak comes at a lightheaded 7,000 rpm, this is a sweet, genuine

performance engine. The 10.2:1 compression ratio requires premium unleaded fuel, but the result is 160 horsepower at a wacky 7,600 rpm, and it's smooth all the way up to that point. Behind the engine is an excellent five-speed transmission that ensures confident performance. No automatic is offered in the Si.

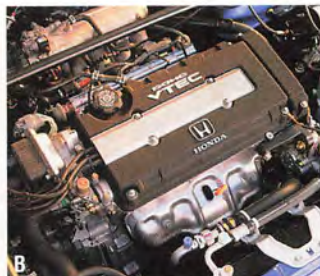
To go along with the extra power, Honda tunes the suspension with specific anti-roll bars front and back, stiffer springs and specially valved shock absorbers. There's also discs brakes at all four wheels, though anti-lock isn't offered, and the wheels and tires are upgraded to 15 inches. The Si is stiffer than other Civics, but it's still comfortable and remarkably capable.

Inside, the Si gets leather wrap on the steering wheel and shift knob, "carbon fiber" instrumentation, open-design head restraints, a six-

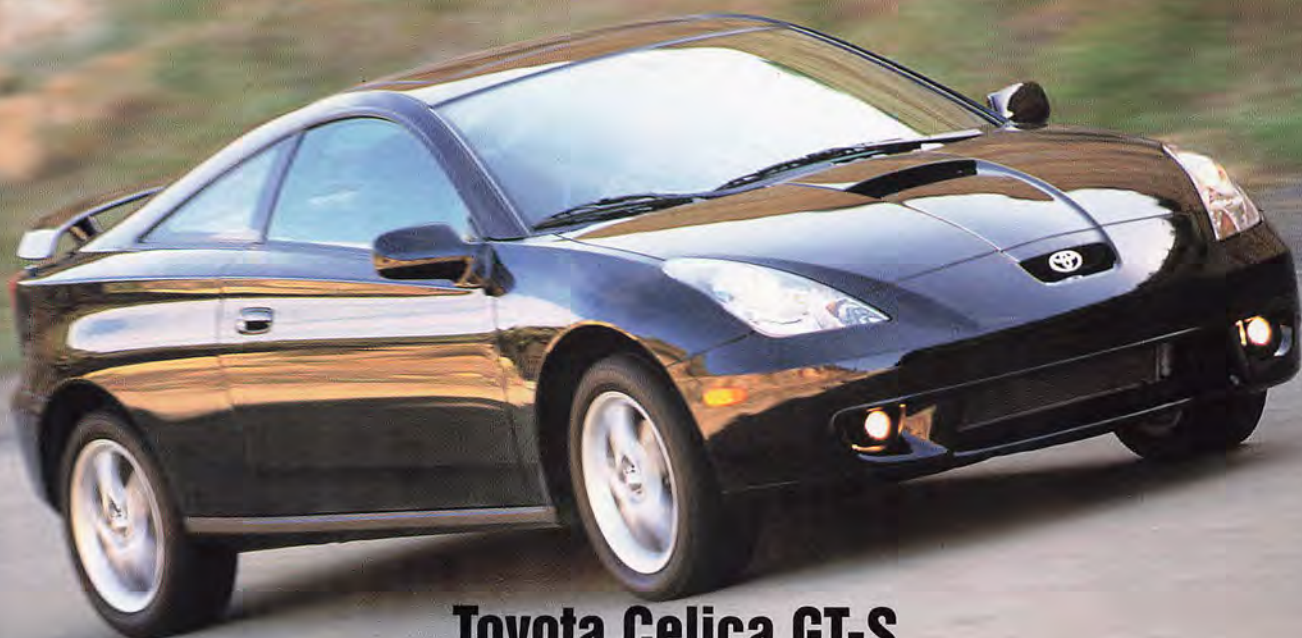
speaker stereo with CD player, air conditioning and a power glass sunroof. Otherwise, it's pure Civic. That means it's good and comfortable, but hardly luxurious.

The Si's a solid commuter; not a raw-nerve Type R. Nonetheless, on winding roads, it's pretty wonderful. It'll push its front end if driven hard, and it lacks the ultimate composure of the more expensive cars in the test, but it's always entertaining. Wind it up, and it thrills better than any \$17,545 car should. And if you want more power, there are 6 million aftermarket companies out there eager to sell you the parts to make it happen.

There's a new Civic coming for 2001. If Honda follows its typical pattern, however, it's likely that a new Si won't appear until a few years later. That makes this car a bargain worth grabbing now.



Both the Acura (A) and Honda (B) rely on variable valve timing to extract the most power out of their engines. The 1.8-liter Type R motor spins out an amazing 195 horsepower, while the Civic's more modest 1.6 makes an impressive 160. Toyota adds variable lift and timing to the Celica's 1.8-liter (C) to produce a sweetly refined 180 horsepower. VW aims for torque rather than horsepower in the GTI's turbocharged 1.8 (D), and the result is the most useable engine in the test, even though it's rated at just 150 horsepower.



Toyota Celica GT-S

Old name, new and much better car

Toyota has been hawking Celicas in the United States since 1971, but for the last few years you'd have been hard-pressed to notice. The model just dropped off the compelling-car-radar screen; it was expensive and selling in tiny numbers to people who didn't have the good sense to head over to an Acura dealer. The 2000 Celica is radically improved in every way, however, and it's priced to sell with a \$21,165 base price. If this car doesn't revive Toyota's coupe business, nothing will.

All Celicas since '86 have been front-drivers, and this one is no different. However, its engine is an all-new design, and in the GT-S model (there's also a pokey GT) that engine is a high-revving short-stroke design whose 16-valves are controlled by Toyota's VVTL-i (variable valve timing and lift) system. The result is 180 horsepower

at a nosebleed 7,600 rpm and a 7,800-rpm redline. With a horsepower peak so close to redline, it's a good thing there's a six-speed manual transmission aboard to take advantage of it (though it could use even more ratios). The engine, co-developed with Yamaha, is also smooth and less raucous at high rpm than either the Civic Si's or Integra Type R's, which makes using the revs that much more pleasant.

With a 0-to-60-mph clocking of 7.3 seconds, the Celica goes step for step with the Type R, but it's a far more civilized car than the Integra. With its wheels pushed out to the corners and its skin tightly drawn, the Celica is confident and handles beautifully. The big treat, however, is the ride: smooth, comfortable and well-mannered even over idiotic pavement heaves. It nearly matches the hard-edged Integra through the slalom, but clearly outshines it on the road. If you live on a race track, buy an

Integra Type R. If you live in the real world, get a Celica GT-S.

The Celica also has a roomier interior than the Integra (though it's nowhere near as cavernous as the VW GTI) and a more modern appearance, with the niceties expected of a 21st-century machine, such as cruise control and a sunroof. There's a deep-in-the-bunker feeling that some drivers may find disconcerting, but the interior is otherwise impressive.

One caveat regarding the Celica GT-S: As good as this car is with a six-speed, it's miserable with an automatic transmission. The four-speed automatic can be shifted with steering-wheel-mounted buttons, but a car with such a narrow powerband needs all the close-cropped gear ratios it can get. When a shift occurs in the automatic GT-S, acceleration dies an ugly death.

Still, the new Celica is the class of the coupe world.



The Integra's dash (A) has been around since 1993, and its age shows in the clumsy ventilation controls and somewhat odd shape. But the steering wheel is awesome, as is the aluminum shift knob. The Civic's cockpit (B) is dressed up with carbon fiber, but still feels strictly econoboxy. The Celica dash (C) sets well back from the windshield and has Spacely Space Sprockets instrumentation that's cutting edge now, but may look dated in a few years. Best dash of the bunch is the GTI (D), which is bolt upright but very easy to read and use. It's plain, but it works.



Volkswagen GTI GLS 1.8T

Beetle? We don't need no stinkin' Beetle

Now that the initial hysteria has died down, we can tell you the truth about VW's new Beetle: It's a girl's car. Men drive the GTI, the sporting version of VW's Golf. And the Golf, in turn, is the car upon which the Beetle is based.

VW confuses the GTI issue by offering it in three different versions: a GTI GLS 2.0 powered by a normally aspirated two-valve 2.0-liter four that makes a sluggish 115 horsepower; the GTI GLX with the company's lusty, narrow-angle 2.8-liter V-6, which makes a stout 174 horsepower; and our subject here, the GLS 1.8T, which has the turbocharged, five-valve-per-cylinder 1.8-liter four first seen in the Audi A4. (This engine is also available in the Beetle and the four-door Jetta). While it's rated at just 150 horsepower (by 10 horsepower, the least of any car here), it makes 162 pound-feet of torque (the most in this test by 29-pound feet) consistently from 2,200 to 4,200 rpm. Counter to what one might expect of a turbo engine, this one has a torque curve so friendly, it's a surprise that it doesn't leap out from under the hood and buy you a beer. It's not the swiftest car (though its 7.6 0-to-60-mph clocking is good), but it's the easiest one to go quick in.

This engine is endearingly smooth, its effortless power is intoxicating and it's very quiet. It matches the rest of the GTI, which is bolt upright where

the other cars are sleek, and cushy where the others have a race-boy edge. The car's structure is exceptionally solid, which allows the suspension to work better than on previous VWs. That suspension is soft, however; our test car didn't have the additional "sport" package, which firms it up, so this car plowed into corners more profoundly and its tires wailed louder.

What makes up for that hard edge is the GTI's utility and ease of use. It is by far the roomiest car in the test and the only one with a rear seat that could plausibly be used by adults.

The rear hatch opens to a huge cargo space, the front seats are perfectly shaped and covered in a nice cloth or leather, and the Monsoon sound system is awesome. The GTI is the fast little car to have when you also need to haul stuff and you care about comfort as much as speed.

In virtually every aspect except body design—from engine to rubbery shifter and tire size—the GTI 1.8T and Beetle Turbo are the same car (they share vehicle "platforms"), but the \$19,225 GTI is more practical, more useable and, as men, we think better looking. •



Performance and Price

	Acura Integra Type R	Honda Civic Si	Toyota Celica GT-S	VW GTI 1.8T
Base Price:	\$24,350	\$17,545	\$21,165	\$19,225
Price as tested:	\$24,920	\$18,049	\$24,490	\$20,470
0 to 60 mph, sec.:	6.7	8.2	7.3	7.6
Quarter-mile, sec @ mph:	15.2 @ 92.9	16.3 @ 86.7	15.7 @ 88.8	16.1 @ 86.8
Skidpad, g:	0.88	0.82	0.88	0.78
Slalom, mph:	62.4	58.4	63.2	59.1

Performance statistics courtesy of Edmunds.com.



Off the beaten path in Georgia's Olympic city

by Marty Padgett

So you're headed to ATL airport—maybe flying through to somewhere colder, uglier—and you have some time to lose. New York has everything. Chicago has big buildings and blues. What are you gonna do here for 24 hours?

The first thing to do is forget every-

thing you've heard about Atlanta. You don't need to see the CNN Center. Or Jimmy Carter's library (*Mad* magazine and a dog-eared copy of "The Seven Habits of Locally Overrated Presidents"). Or the over-restored building where Margaret Mitchell wrote "Gone With the Wind." Go ahead and see the spot on Peachtree Street where she was run down by a car, by all means, but not the place where she worked.

Dump the glossy travel guides, while you're at it. They get it all wrong anyway. Atlanta isn't "the city too busy to hate." In his cracker-fied, Carl Hiaasen take on the city, "Down on Ponce," local author Fred Willard nailed it when he said Atlanta might be "a city that may be too busy to hate, but isn't above taking a little time off to steal."

You'll get a better taste of the fastest-growing place in the history of civilization once you get off the highway and drill into the neighborhoods inside the Perimeter, the city's ring road. For every plastic-and-cardboard suburb outside it—Alpharetta and Dunwoody are pretty criminal in that respect—there's a cooler counterpart, like hip-hop/granola East Atlanta or funky, transcultured Cabbagetown.

Mix in the never-ending stream of strangers brought in by the world's biggest airport, and you'll see a far different place than Fodor's has lined up for you. With any luck, you'll see

exactly what the Atlanta visitor's bureau doesn't want you to know about. Tell the office you're saving on airfare and do it all before the 6:30 a.m. flight back home.

The River Ponce

Start off your perfect day on the avenue of broken dreams—and bottles, needles and windows. Ditch your car at one end of Ponce de Leon Avenue, check your cell phone and wallet and start walking.

At one end, it's the heart of Midtown Atlanta—big skyscrapers, the "fabulous" Fox Theatre, enough money to buy Bolivia—and at the other, it's Driving Miss Daisy territory, weighted down with magnolias, mansions and matrons. In between, Ponce de Leon is less the Gucci belt city planners would like it to be and more like a C-section scar.

Townies call the part between Moreland Avenue and Peachtree "The River Ponce," because of the perpetual flow of weirdos, crackheads, suits and nymphettes of all biologies. It's home to many of the city's offices, the most aggressive transgendered hookers this side of the Lower East Side and a "Killer" Kroger Market, where fetching groceries means dodging panhandlers, government trons and the occasional knife fight.

"I'd like to recommend the following walking tour to skeptics," says author Willard, who lives two blocks off the



street. "Park somewhere around Mary Mac's on Ponce de Leon Avenue, about three blocks from Peachtree. Walk east down Ponce toward Decatur Street. Stop and speak to everyone you meet. When you get to the Briarcliff Hotel on North Highland Avenue, cross the street to the Plaza and walk back.

"By the time you get to your car, you'll have all the information you need to write a novel about homeless people living in community, the treatment of AIDS, hustlers, hookers, burrito rollers, flame-thrower guitar bands, boneheads, bong heads, base heads, winos, all-night diners, sports bar chicken wings...you name it. Never again will you say, 'Atlanta is a city of suburbs and malls.'"

Along the way, you'll come across Atlanta's seminal strip club, the 1950s-vintage **Clermont Lounge (404) 874-4783**, where the classiest draw, hands down, is Blondie. About the same girth, age and hair color as today's Debbie Harry, Blondie recites her own poetry and crushes beer cans between her pendulous breasts while sitting on a bar stool. (Strangely, the crappy local paper hasn't yet reviewed her catchy Grand Guignol take on "Leaves of Grass.")

When you get bored with mangled Iron City wreckage, you can catch a compelling art flick at the **Plaza Theater (404) 873-1939**, or watch the river of life drift by like flotsam at

the **Majestic Diner (404) 875-0276**, open 24 hours and dodgy for 23 of them. If it's sugar you're after, Krispy Kreme's über-outlet is near the downtown end of the street. And right next to the impending Home Depot there's Eats, an absurdly cheap joint where you can get a chicken and cornbread lunch for \$5 served by a white Rastaleaning kid who smells like cloves and looks like Beck's skinnier brother.

Get here quick. The big-box stores have invaded, the local gourmet grocer is wedged in an old soda counter near the Majestic, and \$200,000 condos are flying up. The big renaissance might finally be underway. Then again, ask the homeless guy who doesn't want your change, just a beer. Maybe it will always be Ponce, always a part of the city's undertow.

Lindbergh babes

No visit to Atlanta would be complete without a time-honored city tradition: a no-holds-barred tour of the city's unparalleled strip clubs, or as one buddy calls it, "Boobapalooza."

From Ponce, find Piedmont Road and follow it north until the street signs give way to neon signs like NAUGHTY GIRLS, BARE NECESSITIES and TATTLETALE ("ADULT ENTERTAINMENT SINCE 1976"). You're in the Golden Triangle, where hourly hundreds of dollar bills mysteriously vanish under elastic bands and silky underthings.

For conventioners and out-coun-

try yokels, this triangle between Lindbergh Way, Cheshire Bridge Road and Piedmont is nirvana. By any standards, it's a rarity: fewer than 15 percent of the country's adult clubs let you see bare-chested dancers and consume alcohol simultaneously. These two great tastes go together within the city limits, but only in a few places outside the Perimeter, so be choosy.

Oh, and if you're expecting vintage burlesque, dig through your dad's sock drawer instead. Atlanta's strip clubs are brassy, take-it-all-off affairs



Naughty Girls, naughty clubs on Cheshire Bridge Road.



The Gold Club—soon to be Club Fed?



Reverend Aaron blesses the bikes outside L5P's Vortex.

that reward gynecological precision. A lap dance can run you \$20 at the major-league clubs. Physical gratification is not on the menu, though, unless your thing is being pulverized by a 300-pound doorman.

Of those top-notch clubs, the best is probably the **Gold Club (404) 233-1210**—and it's also the most endangered. Last year, the Feds busted in on the fun and charged club owner Steve Kaplan with racketeering, credit card fraud, money laundering and police corruption. They're also reportedly looking for ties to the Gambino organized crime family. Then there's the matter with the New York Knicks. Gold Club dancers are alleged to have gone to Charleston, South Carolina, to entertain some players with their Knicks down.

The Gold Club's still got its liquor license, for now. But this club, the world-famous **Cheetah's (404) 875-1764** and other city clubs are facing more attacks. If Mayor Campbell has his way, the whole area will be turned into office parks and upscale condos. And as in-town property values skyrocket, land-rich homeowners are bleating about nonexistent crime and

trying to shut down the joints.

Back when Atlanta's downtown was shriveling quicker than fatty bacon, strip clubs and booze seemed like a good idea. If you're out for a seamy time on the town, it still does.

Get bent—or pierced, tattooed or blitzed

After you've spent your last dollar bill, hump it across Lindbergh and down Briarcliff Road until you see the screaming 12-foot-tall skull. You've arrived in Atlanta's funkier, herb-friendliest enclave, Little Five Points, or L5P.

Dissolute, angsty twentysomethings have claimed this corner at the intersection of Euclid and Moreland Avenues as their own. Carved out of surrounding Victoriana—only recently a place that began attracting people with 401Ks and stock options—L5P is a mecca for piercing, tattoos and Kool-Aid-colored mohawks.

If you make it there on a Thursday night, catch the weekly meeting of the Little Five Points Scooter Trash, lorded over by the Reverend Aaron.

"It's changed a lot," says Aaron. "When I moved in, it was the hood. There were guys selling crack outside

my door. It was pretty scary."

By day, Aaron's a computer guy; on Thursdays, while the rest of the world is home watching "ER," Aaron and his biker buddies are out in L5P cruising. His Web site—www.l5pscootertrash.com—covers the scene, elects a Biker Babe or Stud of the month and remembers Carnage of the Month, given to the best two-wheeled road rash.

How'd the Reverend get his name? "I was touring with a little band called the Allman Brothers and used to play piano and organ dressed up as a preacher," he says. "But I've always ridden and hung out with bike guys. They thought they were calling me Rev—for the engine."

Scooter Trash got its start by hanging out at the **Vortex (404) 688-1828**, the brew and grill behind the screaming skull on Moreland Avenue. "We started meeting on Thursdays, and other people started catching on. Last Thursday we had 137 bikes there," he says.

Stop in the Vortex for one of the city's best hamburgers. (Skip the fancier yuppie Vortex outlet on Peachtree, underneath some lofts and across from a Starbucks.) The Reverend also recom-

mends Star Bar for psychobilly bands like Truckadelic and the Chillbillies, Nine Lives for big-hair metal, the Yacht Club to indulge a little in the neighborhood scene, or, if you're looking to eat the worm, El Mir, a Mexican place with 50 different kinds of tequila.

Before you leave, take home a little souvenir from **Urban Tribe (404) 659-6344**—how about a tattoo that'll make your girlfriend down a bottle of Valium? If you descend on L5P and want to stay the night, scan the alternaweekly *Creative Loafing* and see who's at the **Variety**

The jerk chicken plate at Eats.



Latin night at the Tongue and Groove.



Playhouse (404) 521-1786, one of the best concert venues in town.

In Little Five Points, the Rev's biker buds blend in seamlessly among the artists, sculptors, musicians, oil salesmen and conga players. "It's a festival-type atmosphere on any given Saturday," he says.

Pub crawl

To end your spree of seeing, spending, smoking and drinking, get yourself up on Peachtree to the intersection at Paces Ferry Road. You'll pass, "Incredible Journey"—like, through the very economic heart of Atlanta. And if it's after 10 p.m., you'll get caught up in a wave of nubile drunkards looking for the same good time you are.

Buckhead, as the area is called, is glassy office towers, high-buck shopping centers and yupscale condos, but it's also getting a national rep as a bad place to hang out. This is the place where an itinerant day trader

wiped out co-workers after snuffing his own family. It's also the 'hood where Baltimore Raven Ray Lewis says he didn't stab two men to death in a post-Super Bowl melee.

The newfound edge to the party scene in Buckhead hasn't slowed down the ruckus that crops up nearly every eve. Most

nights, streams of well-dressed, well-heeled townies make the trek to the Bolling Way's bar crawl and don't step away until they're weaving and booting. More often than not, they end up in the downtown jail—to fight for their cars, which have been towed away, a consequence of Buckhead's meager parking.

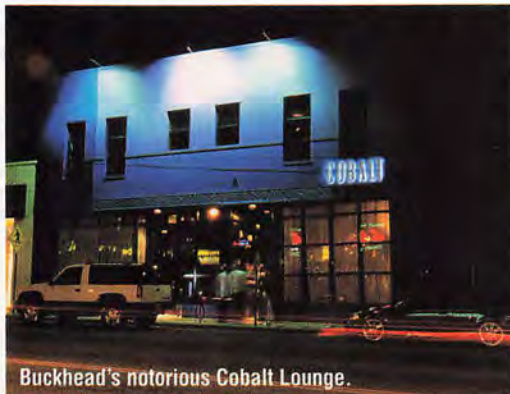
By reputation, Atlanta's a good hunting ground for hormonal male youth: the female-to-male ratio is, as one local bar crawler put it, "at least better than Shaq's free-throw percentage." Don't come here with a woman—go home with one. It's first-date hell, with loud music, few private places and the jealous glares of wifeless schlubs. Take a buddy to effectively scan and cover the territory, and plan on being the sugar daddy: "I always expect the guys to buy me all the drinks I can handle," says reveler Emily C., "and they do it on a regular basis."

With the right mix of attitude, clothes, parking karma and cash, chances are good that you'll find the tongue of your dreams. Try **Tongue and Groove (404) 261-2325** for their Wednesday Latin dance night. **Fado's Irish pub (404) 848-8433** to get stinking drunk in true old-world fashion or even the notorious **Cobalt Lounge (404) 760-9250**, where the door staff is clad in mourning black.

When you're totally stewed, keep in mind that cabbies will know you're fresh meat, and Atlanta's winding streets are basically an invitation to screw you. Make sure you give clear directions to your hotel, especially if it's downtown or at Perimeter Center, a northern enclave of Hold Everything stores and Gothoid suburban teens.

Also, keep your head up when you're crossing the street: in addition to the heavy-metal assaults,

Buckhead's pedestrians are unofficial targets for drivers, and a couple have become hamburger while gamboling from bar to bar. Wear something reflective and bright, and you'll stand out from the crowd for sure. •



Buckhead's notorious Cobalt Lounge.

TEST DRIVE

A full-page photograph of two male golfers on a lush green golf course under a clear blue sky. The golfer on the left, wearing a white polo shirt and blue shorts, is captured mid-swing or celebrating, with his right arm raised high. The golfer on the right, wearing a yellow polo shirt and dark shorts, is also celebrating, with his left arm raised to high-five the first golfer. Both are holding golf clubs. In the background, a single palm tree stands prominently against the sky.

RIPPING AND RATING FIVE TOP DRIVERS

By Frank Riley

E

Chicks dig the long ball. They don't give a crap about sand saves and two-putts from 50 feet. They pine for the nerve-tingling crack of titanium on Surlyn and the thrilling *whoosh!* of a tiny sphere sailing through the air. Beers at the turn aside, nothing in golf is more satisfying than busting a big drive. Long balls put pressure on your opponents. They set up better scoring opportunities and satisfy your most basic animal instincts. They allow you to feel—if just for the moment—like a Tiger, Shark or Golden Bear.

The trouble is, in order to let the big dog eat, you're going to need a big dog. Even if your swing is without fault, you'll need the right driver to go deep. Persimmon, stainless steel, aluminum—they're for wimps. Tour pros gave up on these materials years ago. You need titanium. You also need a long, lightweight graphite shaft and a larger clubhead. Luckily, these are what manufacturers are producing these days, for a price that's not as outrageous as you might think. (Although it's certainly more than what you should truly waste on golf equipment.)

The million-dollar question is, Which driver is the best? Of course, this question is impossible to answer, because your swing is yours and yours alone, and certain drivers will optimize it better than others will. Nevertheless, in an attempt to help you find the perfect driver for you, we at *Real Edge* field tested five of today's best-selling models.

We had golfers from all over the country (with handicaps ranging from scratch to 21) rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being best, the newest sticks from Callaway, Cleveland, Cobra, Orlimar and Taylor Made in regard to their feel, forgiveness, distance, versatility and aesthetics. Each tester, after an appropriate warm up, spent time with each of the five drivers on a clearly marked range, then he rated the clubs based on comparisons to the driver he currently uses.

In reviewing these numbers, again keep in mind that the driver that received the highest overall rating isn't necessarily the best driver for your swing. Remember your tendencies. If you have trouble hitting the ball straight, then you may want to focus on those models that rated high in forgiveness. If you want to hit the ball longer, make special note of those clubs our testers gave high numbers to in distance. If the look of a club is important to you...well, you get the idea.

If you recognize one of these five drivers as possibly being right for you, head to your local pro shop and give it a test drive.

THE RESULTS

Manufacturer: Callaway Golf.

Driver: Great Big Bertha Hawk Eye Titanium.

Average Overall Rating: 45 (Feel—8, Forgiveness—9, Distance—10, Versatility—9, Aesthetics—9).

The Specifics: 263cc titanium clubhead; 45-inch Callaway graphite shaft (X, S, R, L flexes available); Lofts: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 degrees.

Price: \$500.

Manufacturer's Line: "Tungsten Gravity Screw in the sole allows for an exact tailoring of an extremely low center of gravity location for optimal performance and more forgiveness on off-center hits."

Translation: "Our clubs are expensive. But dammit, they're worth it."

Comments:

"This is the best driver I've ever hit," said our 12-handicapper who scored the Hawk Eye with five perfect 10s. "It sets up nice, and its head size is just big enough to give me confidence at address. I feel like I can give it a little something extra."

"Every driver I hit, I hit like crap. The Hawk Eye is the first driver I've been able to swing and get decent results. I'm getting one," noted a 15-handicapper.

"It makes a funny sound at impact," commented a 5-handicapper.

"The face...I can't explain it. It's neither hard nor soft. I can't tell where impact begins and ends," said one of our 9-handicappers who didn't like the way the Hawk Eye set up at address. "To me, the face looks closed. On my first



THE RESULTS

few swings, I felt like I had to open the face, and, not surprisingly, I hit some pretty good fades. When I stopped doing that, and trusted that the face was square, I hit it well. I hit one ball 310 yards, which is 30 yards farther than I normally hit my driver."

Proctor Notes: The Hawk Eye is the fifth Callaway driver to carry the Bertha name, and it appears to be the best of the quintet. All our testers hit the Hawk Eye well, and, on the average, it produced the longest drives, especially for the golfers in the mid-handicap range. Keep in mind, however, that the most improvements in distance came from the golfers with the most erratic swings. This doesn't mean that the Hawk Eye is the longest-hitting club. Rather, it simply made the most out of off-center hits. (Half the testers rated the Hawk Eye a 10 in forgiveness.) Our low handicappers actually hit the Orlimar TriMetal Plus+ the farthest.

Manufacturer: Cobra Golf.

Driver: Gravity Back.

Average Overall Rating: 43 (Feel—8, Forgiveness—9, Distance—9, Versatility—7, Aesthetics—10).

The Specifics: 260cc titanium clubhead; 45-inch graphite shaft (X, S, R, A, L flexes available); Lofts: 7.5, 9.5, 10.5, 12 degrees.

Price: \$375.

Manufacturer's Line: "Aluminum bronze backweight increases dynamic loft to create higher launch with lower spin. Offset hosel encourages a more right-to-left ball flight."

Translation: "The technology isn't completely new, but it should still help your slice."

Comments:

"The Gravity Back gave me the trajectory I've been hoping for. I hit a low ball, but with the Cobra club,



I got my drives into the air and with my characteristic draw," noted one of our better golfers, who produces a less-than-attractive, low ball flight.

"This club sets up perfectly for me," wrote a 10-handicapper. "The offset hosel put my hands in a stronger position at address and allowed me to better square the club face at impact. My worst shot is a slice, and I didn't slice once with the Gravity Back, but I did with the other clubs."

"Maybe it's the offset hosel, or maybe it's me, but I couldn't hit a fade," said a low handicapper. "I could hit a big hook with the Gravity Back, but when I tried to fade it, all I got was a push."

"It's a beautiful golf club," wrote a 12-handicapper. "The bronze weight on the back gives it a kind of old fashion look. And I like the way it looks from address with the offset. I really felt good over the ball."

Proctor Notes: If you're looking for a higher ball flight, then the Gravity Back's your club. It produced the highest average trajectory, according to our testers. And shots hit with the Cobra driver were fun to watch. They hung in the air forever and landed softly. The Gravity Back is a beautiful club that can help slicers slice less frequently.

Manufacturer: Taylor Made Golf.

Driver: FireSole.

Average Overall Rating: 42 (Feel—8, Forgiveness—8, Distance—8, Versatility—9, Aesthetics—9).

The Specifics: 250cc titanium clubhead; 45-inch graphite Bubble shaft (X, S, R, A, L flexes available); Lofts: 8.5, 9.5, 10.5, 12 degrees. Price: \$389.

Manufacturer's Line: "Tungsten center weight plug allows for precise weighting under and behind the ball. The majority of the club's weight is where it's needed most: right behind the sweet spot."

Translation: "Callaway put weight on the bottom and toward the heel. Cobra put weight on the rear. We'll put ours in the middle of the sole."

Comments:

"I hit a Taylor Made TiBubble2, and the FireSole is better," said a higher handicapper. "It feels better than the other



drivers in the test. I didn't hit it as far as my TiBubble2—I think that's because that shaft is longer [4 inches, to be exact]—but the FireSole is much more accurate. None of my test drives were outside 15 yards of my target, and I'm not the straightest driver in the world."

"Is this club the lightest? I think it's too light, for me at least," wrote the highest handicapper.

"The new orange color is very sharp," commented an 11-handicapper. "It has a really classy looking head shape as well. And it feels the best at impact."

"Feels great when you hit it," wrote one of our better hitters. "It feels soft, almost like a persimmon wood, but the ball comes off hot. The ball neither flies too high nor stays too low. It actually takes off low and then slowly ascends, just like the pros."

"I worked the FireSole better than any of the other clubs," said a single-digit handicapper. "I set up for a draw and hit a draw. I set up for a fade and hit a fade. The club is very versatile. In fact, I tried a few without teeing the ball and hit it just as well as I do my 3-wood off the turf."

Proctor Notes. It's strange that the FireSole didn't rate the highest, because it seemed to elicit the most emotion from the testers. It didn't appear to hit the ball as long as some of the other drivers, but the testers raved about the club's aesthetics and feel at address. Perhaps it's the sole weighting or the company's third-generation Bubble shaft. Regardless, in the proctor's opinion, the FireSole is a solid alternative for any handicap.

Manufacturer: Orlimar Golf.

Driver: TriMetal Plus+.

Average Overall Rating: 40 (Feel—8, Forgiveness—7, Distance—9, Versatility—9, Aesthetics—7).

FILTER KINGS
 MILDS
 NATURAL
 LIGHTS
 ULTRA
 NATURAL LIGHTS
 100'S
 SOFT PACK
 BOX



THE HOUSE OF MENTHOLTM



WE BUILT THE HOUSE OF MENTHOL



TWENTY

CLASS

A

CIGAR
ETTES

KING OF ALL MENTHOLS
 THE MENTHOL MOVEMENT



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette
 Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

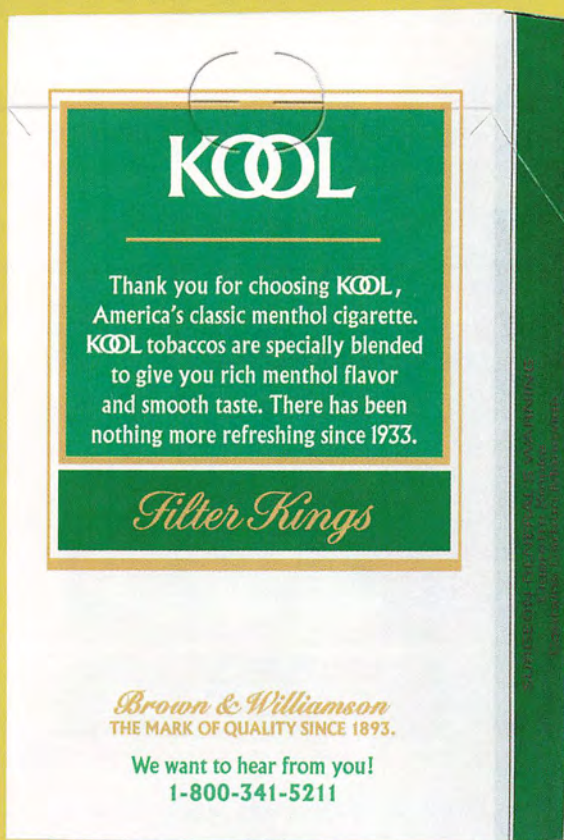
Box Kings, 16 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. Actual
 deliveries will vary based on how you hold and smoke your cigarette. For more
 product information, visit our website at www.brownandwilliamson.com



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WE BUILT THE HOUSE OF MENTHOL



BOX
SOFT PACK
100'S
NATURAL LIGHTS
ULTRA
LIGHTS
NATURAL
MILD
FILTER KINGS



TWENTY

CLASS



CIGARETTES

THE MENTHOL MOVEMENT
KING OF ALL MENTHOLS



Box Kings, 16 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. Actual deliveries will vary based on how you hold and smoke your cigarette. For more product information, visit our website at www.brownandwilliamson.com

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

THE RESULTS

The Specifics: 220cc stainless steel clubhead with alpha maraging face; 45-inch True Temper EI-70 graphite shaft (X, S, R, A, L flexes available); Lofts: 6.5, 8, 9.5, 10.5 degrees.

Price: \$440.

Manufacturer's Line: "Alpha maraging face is significantly harder and stronger than titanium. Copper-tungsten weights in the sole create a superior weight distribution for improved distance and accuracy."

Translation: "There's a lot of technology and different metals built into this club, and you'll pay for them."

Comments:

"Wow," gasped a scratch player, "wow."

"I'm crushing this thing," the same player squealed before begrudgingly returning the club after a 285-yard drive. "And I don't feel as if I'm swinging that hard."

"Halfway down, I'd feel as if I was going to push the drive," commented a 12-handicapper. "But through impact,

the club really comes around. It makes a great sound too."

"I'm a high-ball hitter," said a higher handicapper, "but the Orlimar kept my trajectory down, although I never hit it dead straight."

Proctor Notes: The Orlimar TriMetal+ is not for the meek. It hits the ball hard—very hard. But it doesn't appear to have the forgiveness characteristics of some other game-improvement clubs. This, however, makes the club a bit more versatile. Most of the weighting has been placed toward the heel to combat a slice, according to the company. And for the most part, no one hit a big, roping banana ball. They didn't hit it exactly straight either. If you're interested in this club, make sure you experiment with a softer shaft flex than what you're used to.

Manufacturer: Cleveland.

Driver: Quadpro.

Average Overall Rating: 38

(Feel—7, Forgiveness—7, Distance—7, Versatility—10, Aesthetics—7).

The Specifics: 215cc stainless steel clubhead with maraging steel face; 44-inch graphite shaft (X, S, R, A flexes available); Lofts: 8.5, 9.5, 10.5 degrees.

Price: \$250.

Manufacturer's Line: "The Quadpro is not just another multimetall wood. Its unique design and weight placement give it truly remarkable performance, even on off-center hits. A copper face ring dampens harsh vibrations associated with other maraging face clubs."

Translation: "We know you'll never hit the sweet spot. Here's some help."

Comments:

"I'm not surprised," quipped one tester, "this driver looks like a fairway wood."

"When I caught it good, it felt good, went a longer-than-normal distance and was easy to control," said a mid-range player. "But more often than not, I popped up the ball."

"I hit it too high," said a 13-handicapper. "I need all the distance I can get, and the height off the Quadpro really killed me."

"A nice club," said the best golfer in the test. "I have the Quadpro fairway woods, but I've never hit the driver. I love the fairway woods, and this performs at about the same level. The best thing about these clubs is their weight. Most new drivers I try are too light; I can't ever feel the clubhead. But with the Quadpro, I know where the clubhead is at all times during the swing."

"I don't use a lot of hand action," one tester wrote. "I use my body to hit the club. And the Quadpro really responded to my hip turn. The clubhead never lagged, it was always in the right place at the right time without my having to manipulate the club into position."

"I like the look of the sole," said a 9-handicapper. "It gives you the feeling that you can't hit it fat, which I sometimes do off the tee. It looks like it can



just glide over the grass, but the shallow face bugs me. It doesn't give me confidence. Maybe I'm not used to it, but I get the feeling that I could miss the ball or come directly underneath it when it's teed."

Proctor's Notes: The Quadpro best represented the individualistic nature of golf. More than any other club, the Quadpro had the widest dispersion of scores. Our testers either liked it a lot (notice I didn't say "loved") or they hated it. The lower center of gravity and shallow face are relatively new concepts in modern driver design. Technically, the theory behind their use is sound: They can help players hit a higher-than-normal ball. But the new head shape may take some getting used to. You may have to make a small adjustment in your setup or tee your ball at a different height. Several testers gave the ball a good ride with the Quadpro. It may be the case where the others simply weren't ready to hit a club a little different from the norm.

Final Thoughts

We're not kissing ass when we say that these clubs represent the cream of today's driver crop. As you've probably discovered, the clubs we tested feature different benefits for different kinds of players. If we all had to play the same driver, we'd still be swinging MacGregor Tourneys made from Florida persimmon. Companies push the design envelope in order to find that mythical bullet that will enable golfers to drop strokes from their handicap without having to make serious alterations to their swings. In doing so, these companies can't please every golfer all the time. As the saying goes, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fairway." ●

Getting Picked Up

The unspoken rules of establishing yourself in a pickup b-ball game

By James A. Perreault

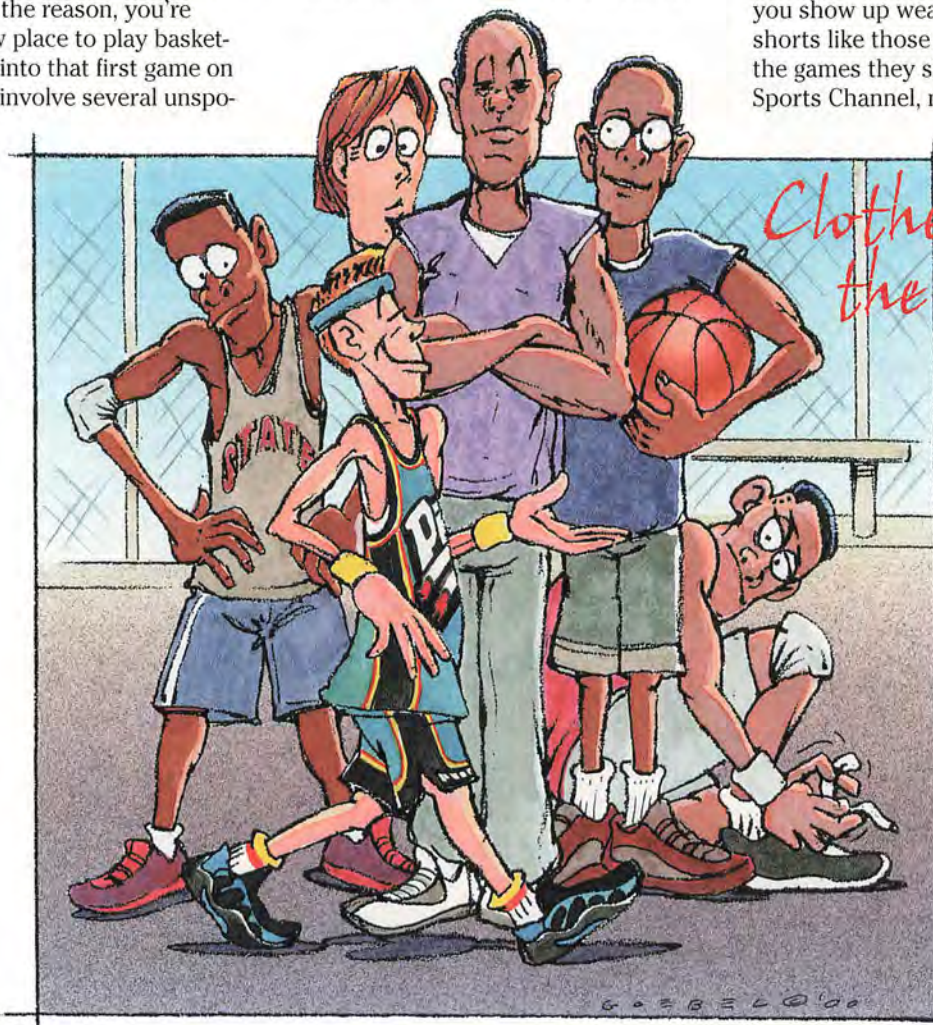
Trying to find a new place to play hoops is like going on a blind date—a blind date with 13 or so guys. Will they like me? What if the game is ugly? What if they're out of my league? Will they let me score? Maybe you just moved to a new area, or you watched March Madness and the NBA playoffs and were inspired to pick up a ball. Perhaps you had your ass handed to you at your old game and are too embarrassed to show your face there again. Whatever the reason, you're looking for a new place to play basketball, and getting into that first game on a new court will involve several unspo-

ken rules. And just as with a blind date, if you blow it the first time out, your chances of getting picked up are pretty slim. Unlike a blind date, however, the guys who mix it up under the boards at your local park aren't likely to look for a polite way to tell you to take your sorry, no-outside-shot-having self elsewhere.

Clothes make the man

While there are no hard and fast rules about what you should wear to

play ball, there is a good test to see if you've got it right: After you're dressed, ask your girlfriend or wife how you look. If she says "nice," you're rocking the wrong gear for breaking into a pickup game. Go back, sift through the hamper and find an old T-shirt with some holes in it and the baggiest shorts you own. Anybody who's seen an NBA game in the past couple of years knows that baggy is in. (And we should all pray hard that it stays that way forever.) If you show up wearing tight, old-school shorts like those the players wear in the games they show on the Classic Sports Channel, not only won't you



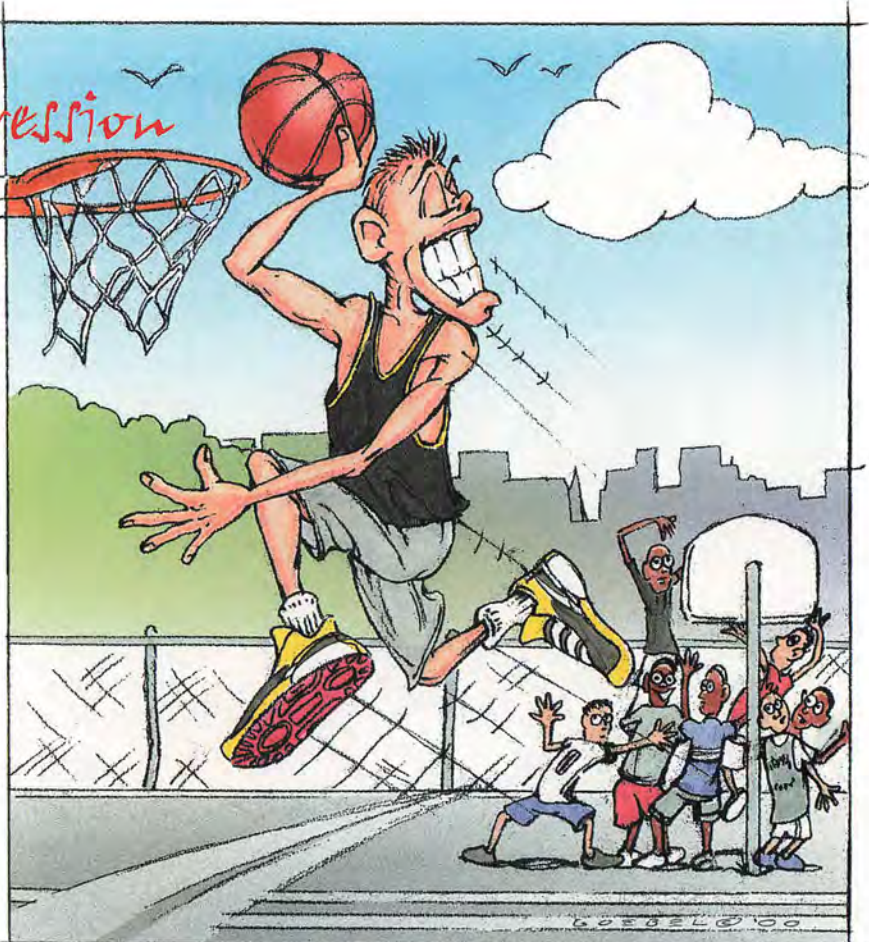
The first impression

get picked up, but you might just get your ass kicked as well.

A lot of guys think that wearing official NBA team attire somehow lends credibility to their game. Wrong. One piece—and one piece only—of team clothing is acceptable. If you come decked out in a complete Lakers uniform, you'd better be named Kobe, or you might as well be wearing a shirt that says I SUCK, AND I'M TRYING TO COMPENSATE BY WEARING ALL THIS EXPENSIVE GEAR. Good players don't wear nice gear to run in.

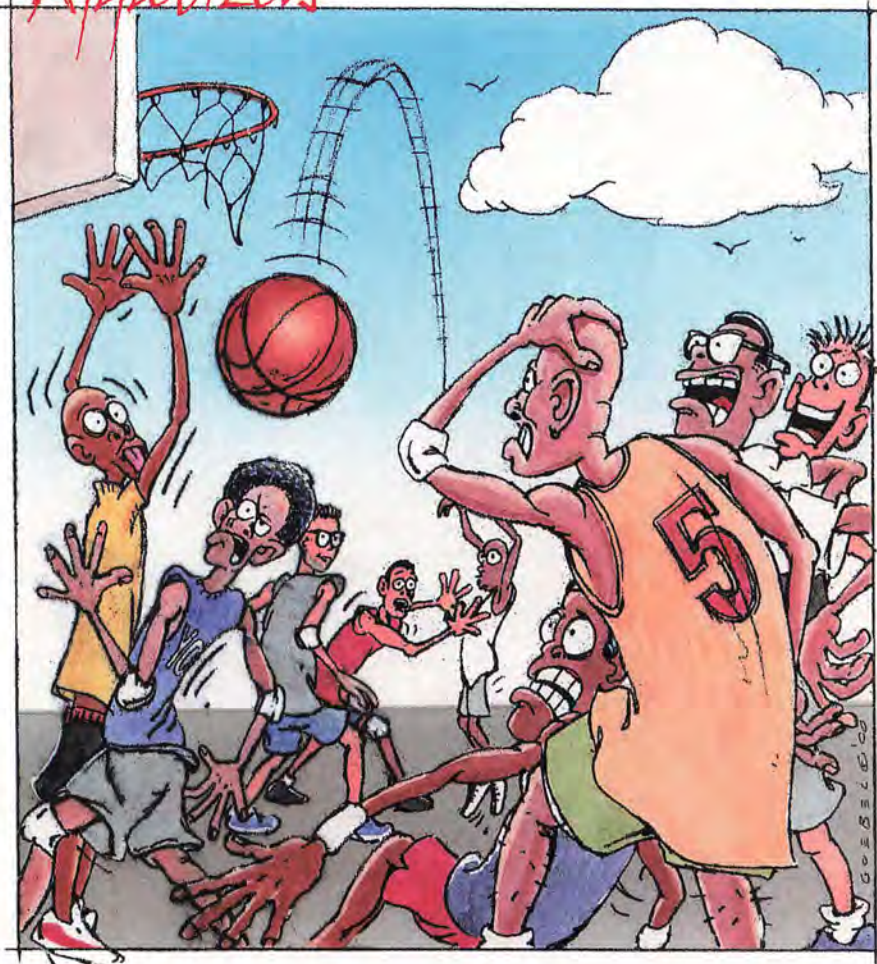
Shoes are a different matter. For whatever reason, what you wear on your feet to a pickup game has come to be symbolic of your game. If your shoes are cheap, your game probably is also. Too expensive, and you probably play selfish and dumb—two-hundred-dollar kicks are for show not for playing. Too old and ratty, and you'll be mistaken for a homeless person. The guys already on the court might give you their empty Gatorade bottles, but they'll be reluctant to let you play. A mid-range, brand-name pair of shoes is what you want. Just don't show up with brand-new ones, or you'll be ridiculed mercilessly.

Braces, the athletic type, deserve a special mention here, because they lend a certain legitimacy to your game before you even step onto the court. The various types say a lot about the kind of player you are. A knee brace says "This guy has played a lot and probably knows what to do with the ball." An ankle brace means "He likes to mix it up down low. Must be a rebounder or someone who likes to drive to the hoop." An elbow brace says "A shooter. Could be selfish on offense, though." Be aware, however: Wear more than three braces and you'll look too fragile to play.



Getting Picked Up

Appetizers



Finally, throw on some deodorant, for God's sake. If this needs further explanation, you're probably a very lonely guy.

The first impression

If you don't have a friend at the game to introduce you to the other players, the first impression you make will be extremely important. Guys, just like women, will decide from the moment they see you whether or not they want to run with you. As discussed above, clothes are important, but size also matters. Rightly or wrongly, it's assumed that tall guys know how to play basketball. And all other things being equal, a black guy will always be picked up before a white guy. Is this fair? Ask the black guy who is trying to get a cab in Manhattan.

Aside from your appearance, your

approach is also vital to getting picked up. If you shoot around by yourself on the far court, waiting to be asked, then you deserve not to play. That's like sitting at the end of a bar waiting for that tall red-head to come talk to you. The correct course of action is to approach the guys waiting to play and ask, "Who got next?" Don't introduce yourself or say something stupid like "Man, you guys are good." Just ask, "Who got next?" When the guy who has the next game makes himself known, keep it simple: "Pick me up?" If he does, you're set. Given that you're new, though, he'll likely claim to have five already, even if there are only four players waiting. If you point out this numerical inconsistency, he'll probably tell you he's holding a spot for a friend who's on his way. As a new guy, you have no grounds on

which to challenge his statement, so your next move is to query, "Who got last?" If no one has the last game, claim it in a loud voice: "I got last."

Whether you get picked up or call a game, you're at least assured of getting some play time. But like a blind date, how much action you get depends on what you do next.

Appetizers

This is your chance to let your new teammates get to know you, so keep your mouth shut! They only care about your game; save your anecdotes for your girlfriend. Pickup pre-game warm-ups are equivalent to an NBA pre-draft camp. You might even consider warming up someplace else before you show up, because this is your first—and maybe only—chance to impress. Everybody misses some baskets before they're warmed up, but if your shots clank off the rim every time, you won't be given many opportunities to shoot during the game. On the other hand, if you go out and swish everything you throw up, the other guys are going to notice and will be much more willing to dish you the ball during the game—at least until you miss your first shot.

While you're warming up, if someone suggests a game of "21," be sure to join in. It's a good opportunity to showcase all your offensive skills without repercussion. Make sure you clarify the rules during the first few points, though. Every city, neighborhood and court has a different interpretation of the Byzantine rules that govern 21. If you don't know them, they're sure to be used against you during the game.

If you're hot during the warmup, keep shooting. If air balls are all you brought, however, you're probably too tight. Step out of the game and stretch a little. Not many playground hoopsters take the time to stretch out. Not only will it loosen you up, but if the other players see you doing it, they'll probably assume you're a serious athlete. Just don't sacrifice your shooting practice altogether.

The main course

Finally, you take the court, and your first game is about to start. Now is the time for introductions. Unless you're one of those extroverted freaks who's already introduced himself to everyone and the backboard, you've probably played it cool and haven't talked much to this point. If one of your teammates doesn't introduce the team members to you, go around and do so yourself. This will make it easier for them to yell to you during the game. If you don't tell them your name, your teammates most likely will give you a nickname you won't want. And once you have a nickname, it's sure to stick. We called one guy in our game "Elvis" for at least six years.

What you do in the first game will determine your fate. In fact, the first shot you put up can determine your whole career on that court. A bad first shot could mean you'll never get the ball again; a spectacular one could signal the start of a new court legend. Don't be a fool, though, just settle for a good one—one you're sure you can make.

Actually, that should be your game plan for the entire first game: Shoot only when you're positive you can make the basket. Otherwise, pass the ball, dish out assists, play defense and set picks for your teammates. They'll love you for it. Of course, if you can consistently shoot above 50 percent and carry your team to victory, then the rules are a little different. Just be damn sure you can do that before attempting it.

As a rookie, you're going to be tested when it comes to fouls, both giving and receiving them. The cardinal rule for an unknown player is to take the cheap fouls without calling them and not to argue if they're called against you. No one wants a whiner in his game. This doesn't mean you always have to roll over. Instead, pick your battles and stick by your calls. Be honest, even if it hurts your team. Players will respect that—at least for the moment.

Don't be afraid to play hard, but don't play dirty. If you don't know the

difference, then someone on the other team will probably inform you very quickly and very forcefully.

If you're not an offensive star, you can still make a big impact as a defender. Most teams have too many shooters as it is anyway. If you're a stopper on defense, you'll be called "Kurt," "Rodman" or "The Glove," and will always get picked to play, because shooters don't like to play defense. Besides, everybody knows that defense wins games.

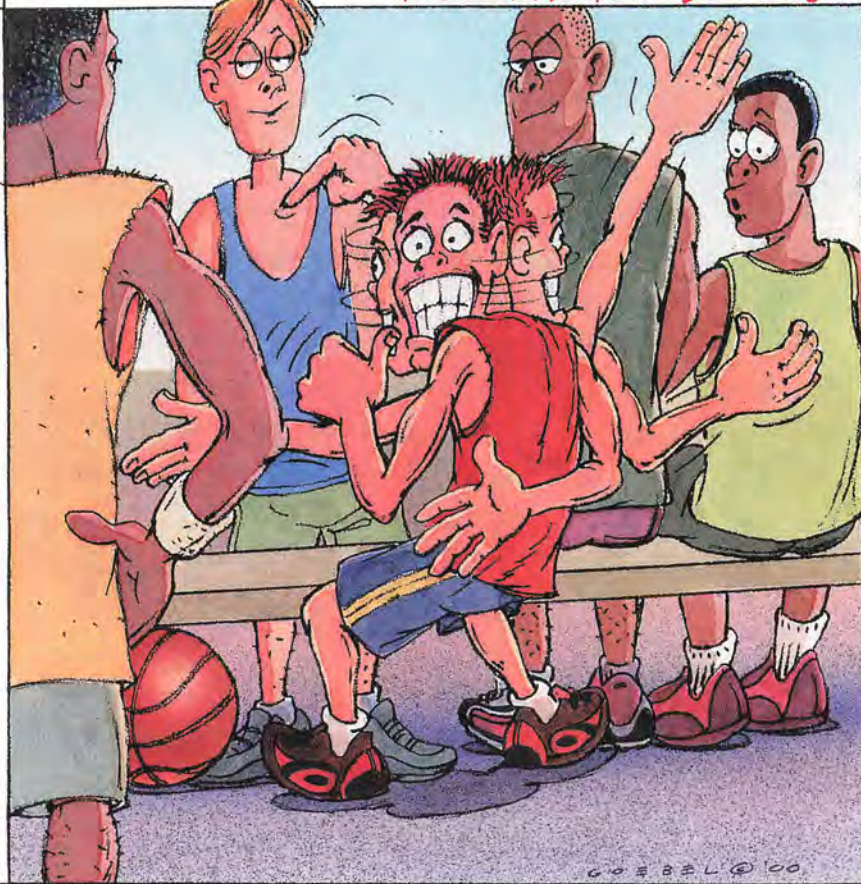
Will there be a next time?

All good pickup games must eventually come to an end. Most are played outside and usually conclude for one of two reasons: Either there aren't enough players who want to continue running, or it gets too dark to see the ball. If you've stayed until the end the game, or even if you have to leave

early because your woman isn't the understanding type, it's vital that you accomplish one thing before you leave: get invited back. You'll know if they want you to come back if one of the players makes a point of telling you on what days they play and when they usually start.

If, for some reason, they don't invite you back and you liked the game, ask when they usually play. If they point blank refuse to tell you, it's probably a pretty good indication that you should consider a new sport. Unless you move like Jerry Lewis, however, they'll probably tell you the correct times, and your search for a new pick-up game will be over. If so, remember what you went through and let the next rookie who comes along run with you. Unless, of course, you're holding the spot for a friend who's on his way. ●

The main course



The Testers



It's a fiercely competitive pizza universe, and we're here to make it a bit more comprehensible.

Slice Off!

Four guys and a bikini model taste test pizza

By John Pearley Huffman

There are well over 60,000 pizza outlets (parlors, stores, kiosks, whatever) in the United States. And according to at least one survey, a full 93 percent of Americans eat pizza at least once a month. In fact, another survey says that the average American eats 46 slices—that's around 23 pounds—of pizza every year. Forget fried chicken, burgers, tacos and every other sort of junk food; when America wants fast food, it wants pizza. So following a long tradition that stretches back one issue, when we taste tested beer, we gathered four guys and a bikini model to evaluate pizzas from popular takeout outlets.

First, though, a brief review of pizza history. Sure, pizza is Italian, but it's also one of those foods that emerged spontaneously throughout the world. After all, it's not like the idea of bread with toppings is all that startling. The Greeks and Etruscans were making something like pizza as early as 3,000 years ago, using flat bread as a plate for other foods and spiced breads to sop up sauces, respectively. It was in Italy, however, where the impoverished Neapolitans combined what little cheese they had with their meager supply of meat atop bread to develop what we think of as pizza today.

And it was the Neapolitans who added the critical ingredient to the modern pizza—tomato—sometime in the mid-16th century. By 1889, when Raffaele Esposito combined the white of mozzarella cheese, the red of tomato sauce and the green of basil to commemorate the Italian flag, pizza had fully evolved.

Pizza came to the U.S. along with the wave of Southern European immigration of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was in the Italian neigh-

borhoods of New York that bakeries would make pizza alongside focaccia and other ethnic breads. In 1905, according to Evelyn Slomon's "The Pizza Book," Gennaro Lombardi opened the first pizzeria in the United States at 53 1/2 Spring Street in New York City. But even into the 1940s, pizza and spaghetti were considered foreign and bizarre dishes in most American homes.

After World War II, pizza's popularity began expanding exponentially. GIs came back from Europe with a taste for the pie, and pizzerias began popping up in places like Tulsa, where the only Italian resident was probably named Tex. Along with all those pizzerias, there also developed a pizza restaurant supply business, which, in the name of pizza-making efficiency and higher profits, began shipping standardized doughs, sauces, cheeses and toppings across the country. By the late '50s, it was possible to get a mediocre pizza in Anchorage that tasted an awful lot like the mediocre pizza you could buy in Key West.

Mass-produced pizza is a fact of American life and, for the most part, we seem to love the stuff. There are still outposts of custom pizza making, family-owned pizzeria's with secret recipes handed down through generations, but they're no match for the marketing clout of the giant chains. Pizza Hut and Domino's may not sound Italian, but they've made fortunes and have grown enormous selling "Italian" pizza. How big is Pizza Hut? According to its Web site, the company uses more than 700 million pounds of pepperoni every year and 2.5 percent of all the milk produced in the U.S. goes into making cheese for its pizzas.

Pizza Hut continues as the world's largest pizza-making organization, with Domino's a strong number two. Behind

these two come familiar names such as Little Caesar's and the fast-growing Papa John's. It's a fiercely competitive pizza universe, and we're here to make it a bit more comprehensible.

We gathered four guys and a bikini model in a dining room at what used to be Marineland in Palos Verdes, California. (They were filming the "Charlie's Angels" movie at the same place on the same day, but they had security guards.) And then we started ordering pizzas from Domino's, Pizza Hut, the well-known Numero Uno, and Borelli's, a local pizza purveyor with a solid reputation. We also called Little Caesar's and Papa John's, but neither delivered in the area and we couldn't find a way to get the pizza back to the test site without it becoming soggy and cold.

We ordered two large, regular-crust pizzas from each outlet: one with pepperoni and one with "everything." As the pizzas arrived, they were put on polystyrene plates and presented blindly to the testers. However, because the pizzas had to be served fresh, everyone pretty much figured out which pizzas were from which place by the uniform or cap of the guy delivering them.

Each tester was asked to rate each pizza from 1 to 10, 10 being best, on five different aspects of pizza deliciousness: crust, sauce, cheese, toppings and spices. They were also asked to give each pie an overall rating as well as written comments.

So who are these testers? Are they experts from some giant pizza institute that issues forth edicts from atop a hill in Sicily? Are they gourmets with delicate palettes that can distinguish basil from oregano through lead shielding? Or are they just some guys we know and a bikini model?



Name: Maria.
Age: Not available.
Job: Bikini model/actress.
Consumes pizza: About once a week.

Recently relocated from Massachusetts to California, Maria works hard to maintain a svelte and profitable figure. Which meant she spent a good chunk of the test time picking the pepperoni off each pizza to minimize her animal-fat intake.

Maria's best guess is that pizza was invented in Naples, Italy, but that somehow the Vikings may have been involved. And she says the best pizza around is made by her mom, who unfortunately wasn't available for the test.

Name: Mark.
Age: 30.
Job: Radio producer.
Consumes pizza: Once or twice a month.

Knowing the bizarre hours radio work often entails, we were surprised to learn that Mark eats pizza just once or twice a month. After all, what's the point of working in an unstable environment if you can't consume junk food throughout the day? Mark recently discovered that being a friend of *Real Edge* editor Cam Benty sometimes entails eating vast quantities of free food.

Mark usually prefers Hawaiian-style pizza, with ham and pineapple, though he says there's no pizza topping short

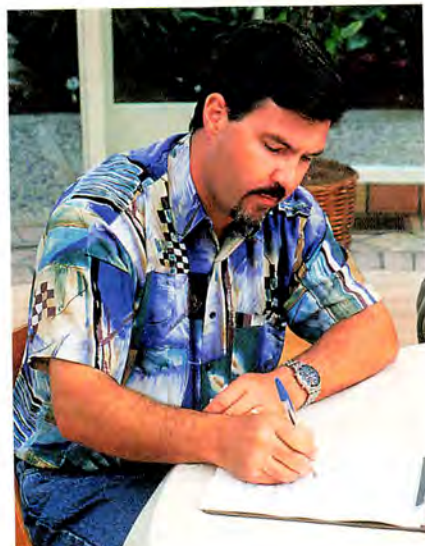


of dog doo that he won't eat. He figures the best pizza in the world is made in Mexico, where, according to him, they use lots of cheese.

Name: Cam.
Age: Less available than a bikini model's.
Job: *Real Edge* Editor.
Consumes pizza: About once a week.

Cam is the boss at this magazine and signs the checks that make working on it such an enormous pleasure. He's quick-witted, handsome, always elegantly dressed and a legendary bon vivant. There's just nothing bad to say about Cam! Yup, Cam's our favorite rate-setter and check-signer. Good ol' Cam, what a guy.

Like a real man should, Cam considers cold pizza the breakfast of champions and prefers his topped with olives and mushrooms. He says he also likes tofu on his pizza, but as long as the checks clear, he's OK with us.



Name: Ryan.
Age: 25.
Job: Mechanic.
Consumes pizza: Once or twice a month.
Ryan's not one for complex cuisine. His favorite pizza topping is "girls in skimpy things" and his least favorite is, of course, "guys in skimpy things." With iron-clad logic like that on his side, how could we not add his insights to this test?



Name: Daniel.
Age: 45.
Job: Contractor.
Consumes pizza: Once or twice a month.

Photographer Randy Lorentzen invited his pizza-loving neighbor Daniel to participate in our test. Since Daniel arrived later than the other testers, he was off sequence, eating the first test pizza when everyone else was chomping on the third. Fortunately he claims to appreciate cold pie as much as hot.

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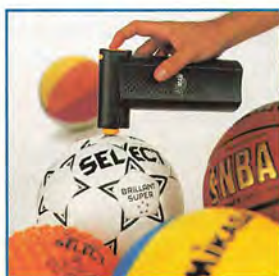


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The Results We divided up the final judging into two categories: pepperoni and everything. Surprisingly the finishing orders were almost identical, with only Domino's and Pizza Hut swapping third- and second-place finishes. While the sweet, cheesy Numero Uno nabbed first place in both categories, it seems that you can get a decent pizza for a good price from both Pizza Hut and Domino's. The Borelli's pizza may be adored by the locals around Palos Verdes, but it's more an acquired taste than are the engineered-to-sell pies from the big chains.

Pepperoni Category



3rd Place (tie) Borelli's

Cost: \$10.85
Crust: 5.0
Sauce: 5.0
Cheese: 6.0
Toppings: 5.2
Spices: 5.2
Overall: 6.2

"Less than average."
—Daniel

"Lots of cheese. No flavor! King of bland. Where's the sauce?"
—Mark

"Too chewy and not too great."
—Maria

"The crust was chewy and maybe a bit underdone. But I liked the overall unique flavor."
—Cam

"Kinda zesty. It's about time! Damn!"
—Ryan

Summary: The testers found the Borelli's pizza moist and chewy, but without a lot of flavor. Many thought the cheese was too thin to cover the handthrown crust completely.



3rd Place (tie) Pizza Hut

www.pizzahut.com

Cost: \$8.00
Crust: 6.2
Sauce: 6.2
Cheese: 5.8
Toppings: 5.0
Spices: 5.0
Overall: 6.2

"Greasy and yummy!"
(with a little heart instead of a dot on the exclamation point)
—Maria

"Tastes like a chicken wing!"
—Mark

"If you find something to like about this pizza, let me know. Horrible. I thought I bit into the plate once."
—Ryan

"Not good."
—Daniel

"Liked it. Good balance. Looks good too."
—Cam

Summary: While it tied with the Borelli's pie in the overall rating, the enthusiasm for Pizza Hut's efforts was lukewarm at best; a few of the testers were downright hostile. Some found its crust soggy; others thought it had too much cheese.



2nd Place Domino's

www.dominos.com

Cost: \$13.00
Crust: 6.0
Sauce: 4.8
Cheese: 6.0
Toppings: 5.4
Spices: 6.6
Overall: 6.4

"Thin crust. Not too much cheese. A little greasy."
—Maria

"A standard pizza. Gotta be Domino's!"
—Mark

"Not spicy enough for me. I like my pizza like I like my women!"
—Ryan

"Very tasty and not dry. I didn't dislike anything about it. It was good."
—Daniel

"Wider crust than usual; the cheese didn't reach out to the edge. But the pizza looked good. Really tasty."
—Cam

Summary: A mainstream and inoffensive pie that seemed thin in both crust and sauce. Serve it at a party and no one will complain. Of course, no one may notice either.



1st Place Numero Uno

Cost: \$12.45
Crust: 7.6
Sauce: 5.4
Cheese: 6.8
Toppings: 7.2
Spices: 6.6
Overall: 7.4

"The crust was great. But the pizza was a bit dry. Very filling!"
—Maria

"Awesome."
—Mark

"I liked the crust, and everything else was good. A pretty good pizza."
—Ryan

"Nothing to dislike. A near perfect pizza."
—Daniel

"Good toppings. The tomatoes were chunks! Big and tasty. But the crust was too big; too much bread. The toppings were good, but hard to find."
—Cam

Summary: Numero Uno's deep-dish, Chicago-style pizza was popular with everyone, even though some found it surprisingly sweet tasting and its crust overwhelming.

Everything Category



3rd Place (tie) Borelli's

Cost: \$16.80
Crust: 4.8
Sauce: 4.8
Cheese: 5.0
Toppings: 5.2
Spices: 6.4
Overall: 6.0

"Great toppings, great taste. Maybe a bit too many flavors, but good stuff. Bell peppers and onions were fresh."
—Cam

"Loved the ham pieces, but this pizza just had too much meat."
—Daniel

"Kind of bland. It just wasn't real flavorful."
—Ryan

"Good cheese, but just too much meat."
—Mark

"It's just not my type of pizza."
—Maria

Summary: With so many high-quality toppings, the Borelli's pizza was a riot of flavors that sort of canceled each other out. Sort of a self-defeating pizza.



3rd Place (tie) Domino's

www.dominos.com

Cost: \$17.31
Crust: 6.6
Sauce: 6.0
Cheese: 6.8
Toppings: 6.6
Spices: 6.2
Overall: 6.0

"Love the crust, not the olives."
—Maria

"Just damn good! But it keeps falling apart. But pretty tasty."
—Mark

"OK, but I've had better. Try cutting a compact disc into quarters."
—Ryan

"I like the toppings, but the big onions are overwhelming."
—Daniel

"The flavor was good, and the pepperoni was great, but the bell peppers and onions were dry and wilted. It's OK, but nothing special."
—Cam

Summary: While everyone rated the particular components of this pizza as good, it failed to impress overall. Almost everyone wanted the onions chopped smaller and better distributed.



2nd Place Pizza Hut

www.pizzahut.com

Cost: \$15.99
Crust: 5.2
Sauce: 5.2
Cheese: 5.6
Toppings: 5.4
Spices: 5.6
Overall: 6.2

"One of the best everything pizzas we've tested. Good flavor, good toppings, and good taste."
—Cam

"I disliked almost everything about this pizza."
—Daniel

"I'm just glad it didn't fall apart before it reached my mouth! It wasn't bold enough."
—Ryan

"Tasty spices, good cheese, but boring."
—Mark

"Pretty good."
—Maria

Summary: Despite impressing virtually no one in the specifics, the Pizza Hut entry was able to eke ahead of the Domino's in overall judging. Why? It makes no sense.



First Place Numero Uno

Cost: \$16.95
Crust: 7.2
Sauce: 6.6
Cheese: 7.2
Toppings: 7.2
Spices: 7.2
Overall: 7.4

"Yummy crust and very filling. The sauce was weak though."
—Maria

"A good pile of toppings, but no sauce. Still it's a slice above the rest, even if it does taste like a doughnut!"
—Mark

"There's not much to dislike here. This is good to me."
—Ryan

"It's better than the pepperoni pizza, but the crust is still too much! It's a door stop!"
—Cam

Summary: Despite a sweet, doughy crust that almost qualifies as pastry, this was the pizza of the day. A well-balanced melange of flavors in generous proportions, proving once again that more is better. ●

SOUND ADVICE

Whether you want something just plain great or mind-blowing, one these audio systems will suit your listening style

By Chris Hobson

My date and I had just finished a bottle of wine and a cheese log (quite an evening) when the crappy little speakers in my "entertainment system" began hissing like a caged rattler. Although I quickly recovered by turning up the volume on the wine, the evening was still missing one main ingredient: music.

I've never been much of a stereo aficionado, and it had been nearly a decade since I'd shopped for any sort of home audio equipment (woofers and tweeters evoked thoughts of dogs and birds rather than speakers), but the time had come for me to face the music—or lack thereof—and purchase a new system.

I dreaded having to deal with the salespeople. The way I figured it, the guys with the frayed suits and stained ties at the big chain stores couldn't possibly have my best interest in mind. Don't get me wrong, those places are fine for certain things like clock radios, microwave ovens and free hot dogs during post-holiday sales, but clearly I was a babe in the woods when it came to audio hardware, and any salesperson with a good delivery could have easily sold me some line of crap.

I knew what I wanted: a juiced-up jukebox that would, on command, splinter my neighbors' eardrums and make my friends run for the door for fear of permanent hearing loss. But more than just loud, I also wanted a system that would give me as close to a live-concert sound as possible. Some research obviously was in order.

I started out by spending a few hours on the Internet looking up various types of audio components. I also bought some magazines dedicated to the subject. I learned a few things and compared a few prices, but was still confused as to exactly which equipment would deliver just what I wanted.

I followed up on a referral from a friend and contacted Mark Smith of Audio Den in Van Nuys, California, who was happy to take me in for an initial consultation. He started with the basics.

"What do you want your system to do?" Smith asked. Simple enough. "Play music," I answered.

"Yes, but what in what form? CDs? Cassettes? Radio?"

I, like everyone else living in the 21st century, wanted a CD player in addition to an AM/FM tuner. While Smith agreed that these were the basics nowadays, he said he does have buyers who still want cassette players and even turntables. I



thought turntables had gone out with the Ford Pinto and bell-bottom jeans. Apparently, turntables (and bell-bottoms) are making a comeback, as many audiophiles are discovering that they prefer the "classic" vinyl sound.

Smith informed me that the latest home stereo component is the recordable CD player, which allows you to duplicate CDs or create your own "best of" compilations. These units are a bit pricey, but are a must-have for guys looking for the latest in high-tech audio gadgets.

Most audiophiles will tell you to always buy the best speakers you can afford. According to Smith, there's a good reason for this: You can add great sound quality to a middle-of-the-road system with a solid pair of speakers and you can really screw up a good system with a shitty pair.

Because money is the final determinant of just about everything in life, we've listed Smith's recommendations for some really wicked systems at different price levels. The following systems are broken down by cost and are priced as complete, integrated systems.

Sure, you could run down to the discount stereo shop and for \$500 purchase a run-of-the-mill system. And for some people, that would be good enough. The question is, How much do you like your music? If you really want to get the most out of your CDs (and believe us, there's a lot you're not hearing on that garage-sale system), you need a stereo that cuts to the chase. Our entry-level package delivers a lot more than those \$500 "deals" can and will adapt to future component additions as you expand your system (and increase your budget).

What about surround sound? According to Smith, for purposes of listening to music, it's better to stick with one directive: buying the best stereo you can. At any price, you can always buy a better sounding two-channel (stereo) system than a five- or six-channel surround-sound system. Surround sound is primarily for movies and TV, not for listening to music. "Put your money in a quality two-channel system," suggests Smith. "You won't be sorry."

Our first two systems offer high-quality construction at a reasonable price—in the audio world. If you've recently won the lottery or lost a rich uncle, however, treat your ears to one the two top-of-the-line systems. Sound advice, to be certain.

System I—Total package: \$1,199

This system's components—a Marantz CD-5000 CD Player (\$250), a Marantz SR-48 Mark II Receiver (\$299) and a pair of Mirage FRX-5 loudspeakers (\$550)—are all connected via Audio Quest wiring (\$100).



Photos by Lynne McCready



The Marantz CD-5000 CD Player produces great sound with clear highs and solid bass, and it includes a variety of advanced technologies that enable it to deliver outstanding CD playback quality as well as CD-RW (rewritable CDs) playback capability. Other cool features include music scan, which allows you to listen to the first few seconds of each selection to help you find the song you want; fade in/out; 30-track music programming; and CD-Text Display, which displays album title, song title and other information that has been encoded into the CD. The CD-5000 carries a three-year warranty for parts and labor.

Complementing the CD-5000, the Marantz SR-48 Mark II AM/FM Stereo Receiver blends excellent sound quality with ease of use at a reasonable price. The unit features 50 watts per channel (wpc) into 8 ohms, full-function remote control, a high-performance AM/FM tuner with 30-station memory, multiple inputs for CD, tape and auxiliary units, plus a headphone jack. The SR-48 carries a three-year warranty for parts and labor.

As we noted in the intro, speakers can make or break your system. The Mirage FRX-5 Series speakers are not only efficient, requiring less power per channel to operate, but are good looking as well. They're designed with injection-molded, polypropylene woofers and glass driver baskets (the frame that holds the speaker cone and magnet in place), both of which are impervious to ringing. The result is a high-quality speaker that delivers an accurate live sound at almost any volume level.

System II—Total package: \$2,263

If you've got a little more cash to throw around, step up to a Marantz CD-6000 OSE CD (\$495), a Creek 4330 Integrated Amp (\$595), a pair of Tannoy R2 Speakers (\$995) and ample wiring by Kimber Kable (\$178).



Questions for the Stereo Buyer

Eight things you need to know before you start shopping

- 1) What components do you want in a system? (CD player, tape player, CD-RW, etc.)
- 2) What are the acoustics like in the room where the system will be set up? (Bare walls, carpeting, hardwood floors, furniture, etc.)
- 3) What kind of aesthetics are you looking for in a system? (Some have a cool retro design; others are more modern looking.)
- 4) How loud do you plan to play the system? (This will determine the size of your amplifier and what speakers you choose.)
- 5) What type of music do you listen to? (You don't need a ton of bass for chamber music.)
- 6) What kind of features are you looking for? (Remote control, multi-CD changer, etc.)
- 7) How important is build quality? (A lower price usually means more plastic components; a higher price usually means a metal chassis and a longer warranty.)
- 8) How much can you spend?

Hot tip: When trying out a system at an audio stereo store, bring along some of your own CDs and listen to the system play music you're familiar with.



The Marantz CD-6000 OSE (Original Special Edition) CD player is about as good as you're going to get at this price. The 6000 delivers detailed CD playback by incorporating new design elements. State-of-the-art laser optics and digital circuitry enable it to track and read the CD's signal with increased precision, and a sturdy mechanical construction with a heavy bottom plate and extensive internal shielding absorb excess vibration.

Creek's 4330 Integrated Amplifier deploys a continuous output of 40 wpc/8 ohm and a 19.5-amp current reserve to power up a 370-watt dynamic peak output. The 4330 also employs a massive 120 VA toroidal (currently the most efficient design) transformer, which utilizes multiple capacitors to reduce power-supply impedance and eliminate unwanted induction.

Housed in cabinets of light cherry wood, the new Tannoy R2 Speakers effectively convey the message being sent through them—be it a babbling talk-radio host or a monster rock band—with a powerful yet articulate projection. Tannoy recommends use of at least a 20-watt amp, but if you really want to raise the roof, give these babies some serious wattage, stand back and hold on to your hat.

System III—Total package: \$4,945

Our third system features a Rega Planet CD Player (\$795), a B&K PT-3 Pre Amp/Tuner (\$598), a B&K ST3030 amplifier (\$998) and a pair of Joseph Audio RM22si Speakers (\$2,299), all connected with wiring from Audio Quest (\$255).



If you're looking to beef up your power reserve, or need to satisfy the demands of some heavy-hitting speakers, try the B&K ST3030 amp. It delivers a commanding 200 wpc and features unique design characteristics that enhance some of the more delicate and detailed sounds, thus producing an impact similar to that of a live performance.

The Rega Planet CD player brings the compact-disc experience a little closer to real life with a smooth three-dimensional sound. The top-loading feature avoids the typical flimsy plastic drawer and gives the unit an exotic high-end feel. Simply put, this player is reliable, easy to use and gives megabuck CD players a run for their money.

Marrying a beautifully crafted cabinet (available in the wood finish of your choice) with state-of-the-art crossover and driver technology are Joseph Audio RM22si speakers. Their "infinite slope" crossover perfectly divides the frequencies between the metal cone woofer, which features an aluminum diaphragm for clearer, more dynamic sound than traditional plastic and paper cones, and the silk dome tweeter, which features smooth extended response.

Sound Words

A glossary of stereo terms

Acoustics: The science of sound. For our purposes, the effect the environment in your home, including furniture, and floor and wall coverings, has on sound.

Amplifier: An electrical circuit designed to increase the current, voltage or power of an applied signal.

Bass: The low end of the audio-frequency spectrum.

Current: The flow of electrical charge.

Decibel: A logarithmic scale used to denote a change in the strength of an electric signal. (150dB can cause instant deafness; above 192dB can kill you!) A top-of-the-line stereo system usually can put out up to 110dB.

Distortion: Any change in sound from the original source. All equipment, especially speakers, imports some kind of change to the signal. Distortion usually refers to a grating, harsh or unclear sound.

Dynamic Range: The range of sound intensity from the quietest to the loudest a system can reproduce without distortion.

Impedance: A speaker's resistance to the current that it is fed.

Ohm: A unit of electrical resistance, or impedance. (As a general rule, the lower the number, the less impedance.)

Tweeter: A speaker designed to reproduce the high, or treble, range of the sound spectrum.

Watt: A unit of electrical power.

Woofer: A bass loudspeaker designed to reproduce only low-frequency sound.



If you want the top of the line in CD players, go for the Classé Audio CDP 1.5. It includes a remote-control wand and is

housed in a handsome anodized aluminum chassis.

Complementing the CDP, and built for the advanced audio enthusiast, is the Classé Tuner One. This new tuner has simple front panel controls and display and an equally easy-to-use remote control that can directly access up to 80 pre-stored stations.

Classé's CP 47.5 preamp utilizes a quiet, shielded toroidal transformer, designed to minimize magnetic fields. The output is fed into several stages of regulation, which use numerous high-quality small capacitors throughout. The result is a very clean, fast and stable power supply that easily follows the rapidly changing energy demands of music. All Classé preamps come with a remote control and user-friendly features. An optional feature is the phono stage (for your vinyl enjoyment), which utilizes a four-layer circuit board to effectively block all interference.

Like its preamp, Classé's CA 201 amplifier (200 wpc) employs a large shielded toroidal transformer to power its high-speed circuitry. To combat microphonics (caused by component vibration and magnetic interference), Classé isolates the vibration-sensitive components while resting its transformers on plates designed to draw magnetic fields away from the circuitry. All of this results in a quick response

system that's low on vibration and has excellent dynamics coupled with a truer sound quality.

Using electrostatic panel technology, the Martin Logan ReQuest Speakers reproduce 90 percent of the music with a single transducer. These speakers evolved directly from Monolith research, which uses a single ultra-lightweight diaphragm to reproduce and embody the best sound quality you could ever dream of from a speaker system. This diaphragm can move fast enough to reproduce the highest highs, but is also large enough to handle the mid-ranges and most bass requirements. The bass it can't handle is covered by built-in 12-inch woofers in the base of the speaker unit.

Regardless of the intricacy of the music you listen to, the ReQuest can project it with much greater clarity than just about anything else on the market. Our system's ReQuest speakers were housed in an attractive matte-finish cabinet; they're also available in a variety of hand-finished hardwood trims. •

System IV—Total package: \$14,821

Our first-class system includes a Classé Audio CDP 1.5 CD Player (\$2,500), Tuner One (\$1,795), CP 47.5 Preamp (\$2,200) and CA 201 Amplifier (\$3,000). The speakers are Martin Logan ReQuest (\$4,800), and the system is wired with Audio Quest Coral XLR Interconnects and CV4 speaker wire (\$526).



Sources

Mark Smith
Audio Den
15600 Roscoe Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 9245
(818) 781-4700; www.audioden-ca.com

Classé Audio
www.classe.com

Creek
(516) 487-3663

Joseph Audio
(800) 474-4434; www.josephaudio.com

Marantz
(800) 270-4533; www.MarantzAmerica.com

Martin Logan
(785) 749-0133; info@martinlogan.com

Tannoy
www.tannoy.com



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I lay flat on my back gasping for air. The 13,000-foot-plus altitude whipped my ass with my every inadequate breath as I hovered on the verge of consciousness. The scuffle of feet brought me back around. I opened my eyes to regard the visage of the woman who was plaguing me. She exuded so much cheer and energy that I wanted to pitch her off the mountain.

"It's only another hour to the top," she chirped encouragingly.

"Great," I responded without enthusiasm, knowing full well that her one hour would be my two. An eternity earlier, she had passed me on the ascent, and now, while I still labored up, she was skipping her way back down. Her obnoxious display of perkiness had broken my spirit for the second time that day.

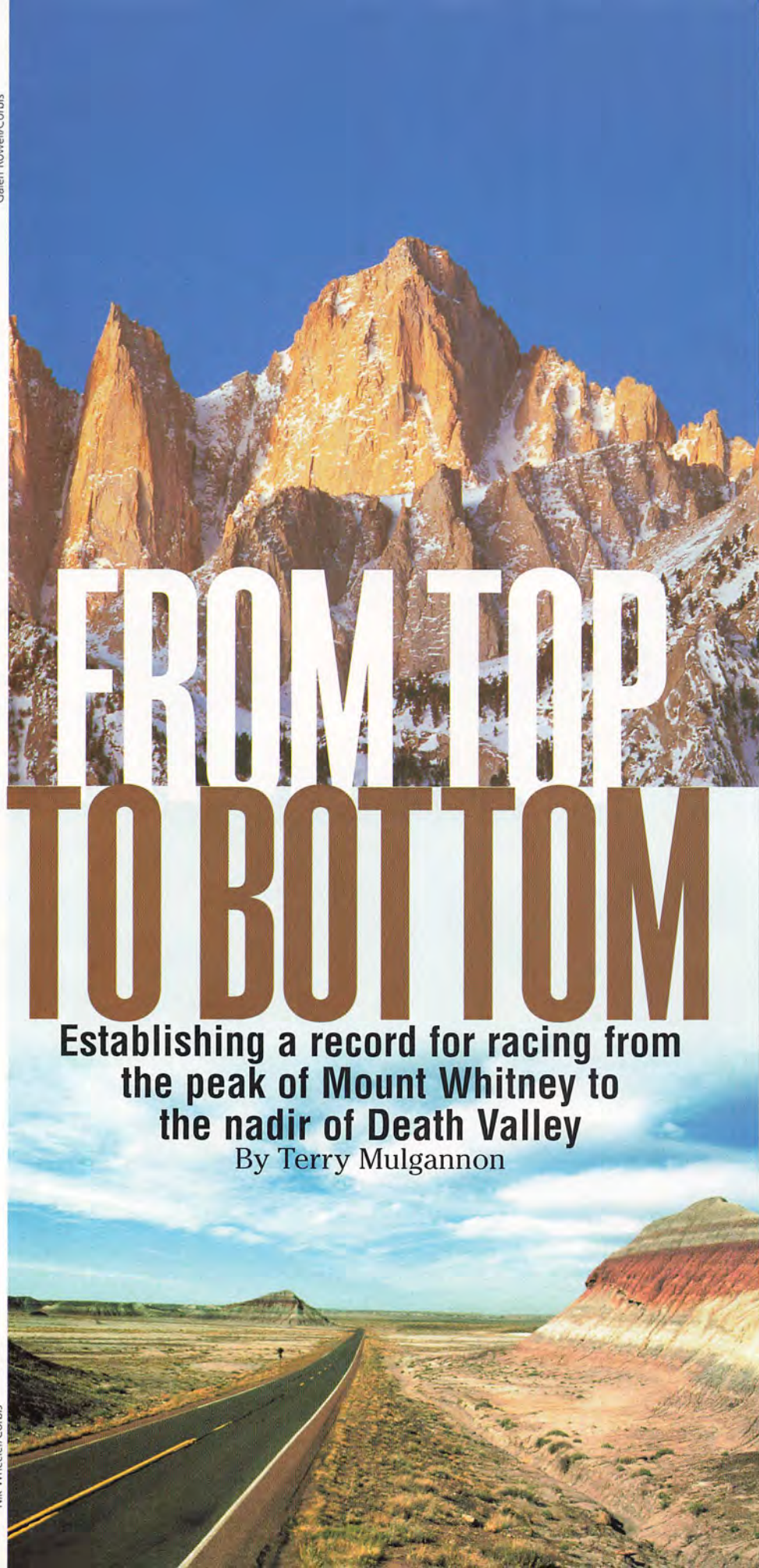
You see, I'd had this idea for establishing a world record by traveling at the fastest possible speed from the highest point in the continental United States to the lowest, from the top of Mount Whitney, at 14,495 feet above sea level, to Badwater in Death Valley, at 282 feet below. Aside from setting a record for that specific trip, I would also set another, more general mark: the fastest, farthest overland altitude descent ever.

Since no one (to my knowledge) had attempted this before, I could pretty much make up my own rules. The plan was to start out early one morning, hike to the peak in a leisurely manner, and then run down (the trail is too rugged to travel any other way but on foot), hop into an abuseable car and speed the 135 miles to Badwater.

It all started in the summer of 1994, when I covered the Badwater 150, a foot race that starts in Death Valley and proceeds to the top of Mount Whitney, for a fitness magazine. The race doesn't quite cover the 150 miles its name suggests, but the 144 or so miles it does traverse are some of the most extreme in the world.

The chunk of California situated east of the Sierra mountain range comprises almost incomprehensible environmental and geographical extremes. In addition to containing the high and low points of the lower

Galen Rowell/Corbis



Nik Wheeler/Corbis

48 states, the region claims the weather that goes with these altitudes, with temperature differences between Whitney and Badwater easily ranging from 80 to 90 degrees. The desert has flowers that come to life and die within hours, while the mountains a hundred or so miles away grow bristlecone pine trees that live for thousands of years. Nature's big out there, and the region reeks of man's failure to overcome the ubiquitous bully.

The Donner Party, of course, is among the most famous to succumb to the jagged ranks of these mountains. In the southern reaches, Death Valley has cooked numerous people for their mistakes, wringing the moisture out of them in a few hours and then turning them into so much dried meat within days.

Ultra-distance runners top the list of serious recreationists who scramble through these mountains and valleys, and completing the Badwater 150 is the ultimate goal. A few dozen runners met at the starting line of the 1994 edition, where at the race start time of 6 p.m., the thermometer was stuck at 120F.

I accompanied the racers for a mile or so, just to get the feel of the event, then returned slowly to my car. I drove the rented Buick Century—heavily stocked with water and other provisions—to the motel at Furnace Creek, some 20 miles up the race course toward Whitney. A sense of lightheadedness and nausea gradually overcame me during the short trip, and I barely made it to my room, where I surrendered to violent sickness before crawling to bed and passing out.

Upon awakening at 2:30 in the morning I felt sufficiently recovered to hit the road to see how far the racers had progressed. Ben Jones, an M.D. who lived within view of Mount Whitney in the town of Lone Pine, was the first racer I encountered. He'd completed the race several times before, but dehydration had prostrated Badwater Ben this time around. He'd just come off a couple of self-administered IVs when I wandered along.

"I had to drop out," he said, "or I may have ended up with kidney failure. I missed a drink while I was talking, and I couldn't catch up."

The doc told me about the start of a race a couple of years earlier when

someone had noticed a dark spot out on the pockmarked Badwater salt flats and went to investigate it. He discovered the body of a man who had disappeared a week or so earlier; for his 40th birthday, he had decided to walk across the valley and back, a 20-mile round trip. He made it 19 miles.

"I did the autopsy," said Jones. "All his body fat had melted off, and his skin was like beef jerky. His vital organs had turned into a gooey liquid mass."

Like I said, there's no margin for error out there.

By dawn, the racers were strung out along the middle third of the course. From the east-facing motel on the edge of the Panamint Valley where I was having breakfast, the competitors appeared as tiny white pinpoints, just barely visible with binoculars, almost 15 miles away on the road slithering down from Towne Pass. The racers took up to three hours to reach the motel, their painful progress evident every step of the way.

From Panamint Springs, the course takes a severe uphill turn to Crowley Pass and continues for a couple of dozen miles up to the level of the Owens Valley. Just short of the valley and 110 miles into the course, I found Joe, the leader of the race for 21 hours, who by that time was collapsing while others gained.

"I'm wimping out," he lamented. "I

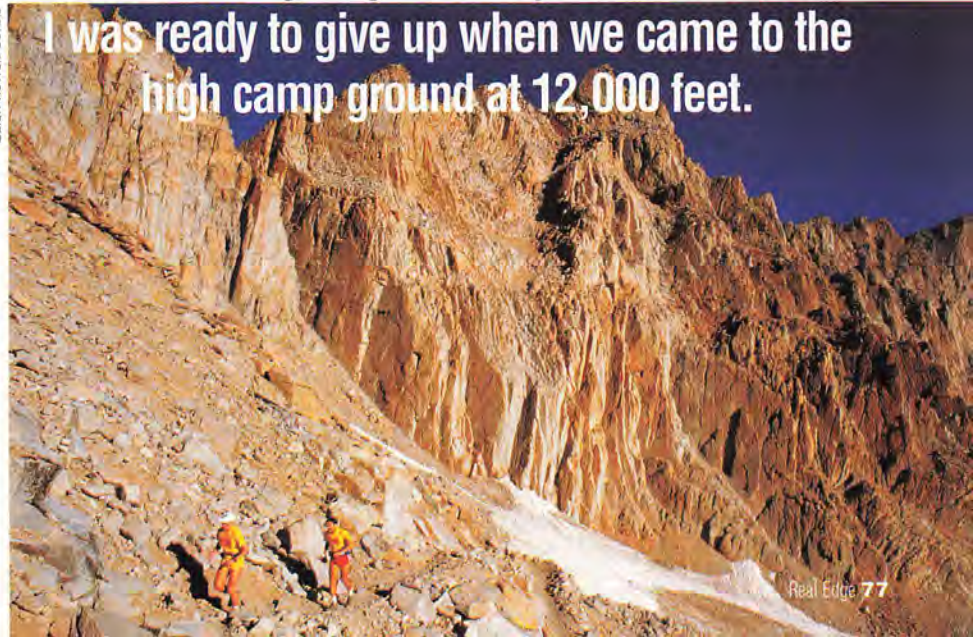
just don't have it in me." Like many of the competitors, Joe was an accomplished 100-mile-race runner, but also like many of the other competitors, he had miscalculated a proper pace for the oven-like course.

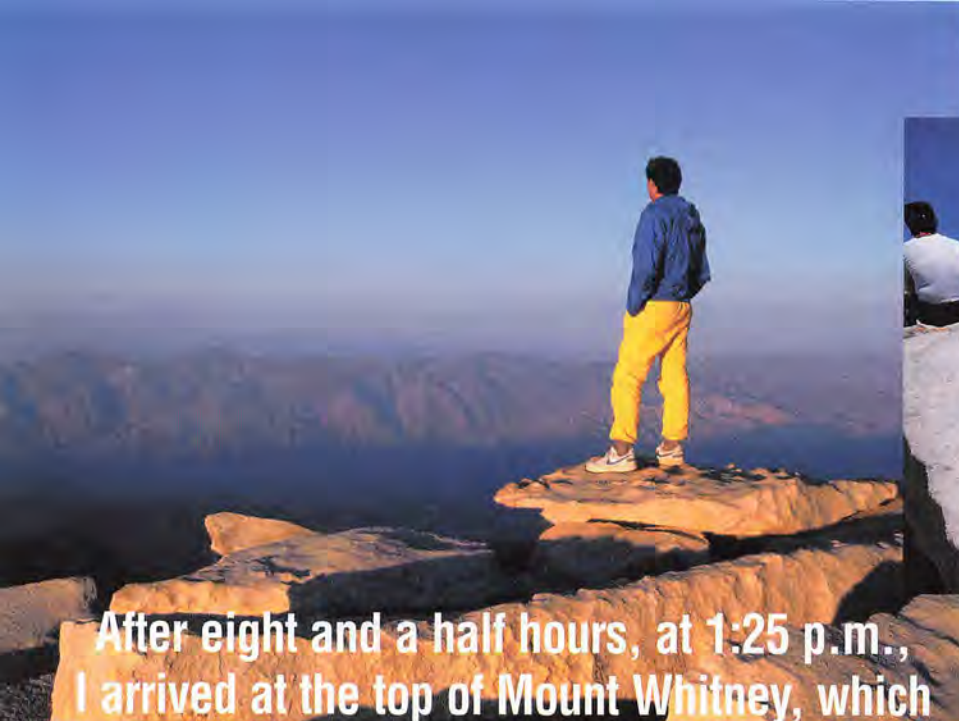
I met the eventual winner late the next morning. Bill Menard was preparing himself for the final 11 miles to the top of Mount Whitney, and at the time, it seemed like a good idea to accompany him. He started before I did, but I figured I'd catch up with him given his exhausted state. It seemed that even a slow jog could carry me to the top within three or four hours, and at first, I managed better than a three-mile-per-hour pace. I caught Bill and his crew just about the time I began to fade, my pace degenerating to meet their own slow stagger up the trails.

The altitude hit me bad, especially since I'd traveled at high-speed from the desert lows to the mountain heights, allowing little time for my physiology to adapt. A headache struck after around five miles, at 11,000 feet, and my pace slowed to that of a snail. Every step took supreme effort, and I was ready to give up when we came to the high camp ground at 12,000 feet. From there, the path switches back and forth almost 100 times across the mountain face. I made it halfway up before I realized that I wasn't going to make it any fur-

A headache struck after around five miles, at 11,000 feet, and my pace slowed to that of a snail. Every step took supreme effort, and I was ready to give up when we came to the high camp ground at 12,000 feet.

Galen Rowell/Corbis





After eight and a half hours, at 1:25 p.m., I arrived at the top of Mount Whitney, which from that perspective resembles a dull, little hummock, a fortuitous configuration allowing room for lots of people.

ther. I couldn't reach the top before dark, let alone do it and return to the mountain's base. I had no provisions or sleeping bag or flashlight. I'd just end up a burden to someone else if I continued. I retreated in defeat.

I ran out of daylight several miles from the trailhead and stumbled down in the blackness, even crawling on my hands and knees to ford a couple of streams. It was 10:30 p.m. when I reached my car. In just a few days, I had managed to screw up a walk through Death Valley and a hike up Mount Whitney.

I knew then that I would never have what it takes to do what I saw those Badwater racers do. Nevertheless, it occurred to me that I could set a world record, even if I wasn't a world-class athlete.

So five years and a few months later, I attacked Whitney again. At 4:45 on a Wednesday morning in October, I headed up the mountain from the trailhead and promptly lost the trail. I returned to the parking lot for a second attempt, leaving this time at 4:55.

Two gigantic ridge spurs reach down from the Sierra Nevada Mountains toward the Owens Valley, the Whitney Portal Trailhead nestled between

them. The pine-shrouded path skirts the right side of the steep draw, landing first at Mirror Lake a mile or two on, then, at about five miles, Trailside Meadow, a narrow strip of green squeezed out from the granite slabs on every side. There the trail tightens up, and there's no more soft dirt to walk on, only gravel and rocks.

It was here that the woman first passed me, explaining as she went that it was her fifth trip up the mountain. She had started 90 minutes after me and blasted by at a rate that left me humiliated. She knew exactly how far along she should be at any given hour and speculated that she would probably take four-and-a-half hours to make the summit this trip, in contrast to her best time of four hours. Seven would have satisfied me.

A half-hour later, passing through the last campground at the little plateau on the mountain's lap, at the 12,000 feet, I came upon a woman standing atop a rock and staring up at the switchbacks that stitched up the last stretch to the crest.

"Geez, there's this woman who's almost running up the mountain," she said. "She still hasn't stopped. I can't believe it."

The majority of people who climb Whitney spend the night at this camp



ground and hike from there to the summit the next morning, benefiting from both the rest and the additional time spent at altitude. Doing it all in one day, I was to learn, is considered extremely difficult for most people, and a sizeable number who attempt it fail. I, of course, had been there, done that, and hoped I wouldn't be heading back to the same territory.

I had been in better shape during my first attempt, but this time, I had spent a few days prior at altitude and felt better at 12,000 feet.

I started up the switchbacks, gaining 1,500 feet over a couple of miles. This segment destroyed me on the first trip, but halfway up I was still moving, and unlike before, I didn't have to summon my willpower for each step.

By the time I reached the crest at 13,500 feet, however, I was spent. You can see both sides of the Sierras from here, east to Nevada, west toward the Pacific Coast, the great mountain serrations receding to infinity. Here, the trail drops down along the west side of the mountain before the final two-mile climb to Whitney, a vertiginous trek exposing steep drops in multiple directions. The view was tremendous, but I didn't care. Every step down made me wince at the prospect of having to regain the altitude on the way to the peak, and, even worse, the idea of having to hike uphill at all when I was headed back down the mountain on my return.

And I found the signs along the path disturbing, the ones warning against lightning. The shelter on the top offered no protection, they emphasized; a few years back a handful of hikers had been zapped while huddling inside. Leave the

mountain, said the signs, if you noticed static electricity in your hair, or sparks coming off your fingertips. I liked that: Get off the mountain, as if it were as easy as walking through a door, as if it didn't take hours to reach a safe, lower elevation.

I'd fully expected to "summit" by noon, but by then, I was still a mile from Whitney's unspectacular peak. Defeat threatened, and for every 5 minutes I walked, I slept for 10. My head throbbed, and nausea prevented me from eating any of the corn nuts or jerky I carried; I had to force down water. I wanted to quit, but motivated myself by rehearsing explanations for my failure; they all sounded lame. I kept getting up and going on, eyeballing my watch so I knew when five minutes had passed, allowing another nap. It was sometime during that period that the woman I wanted to kill insulted me with those words of encouragement as she passed me the second time.

After eight and a half hours, at 1:25 p.m., I arrived at the top of Mount Whitney, which from that perspective resembles a dull, little hummock, a fortuitous configuration allowing room for lots of people. I found a dozen or so up there, all wallowing in their achievements, eating snacks.

"Isn't this a glorious day?" asked one rhetorically. "I came here last month, and with the wind chill factor, it must have been below freezing."

It was, in fact, quite warm and clear, every bit as glorious as the man claimed. Again, however, I was unimpressed. I was in that gritty realm of bare survival, where there was no room for such things as glorious days and breathtaking views. I slept for an hour.

When I came to, I asked a woman there to write down her name and phone number as evidence that she saw me leave the top at 2:30 in the afternoon. Then off I went.

Making my way down was mostly pleasurable—except for those uphill stretches, which broke me all over again—and I finished the trail in half the

Two mountain ranges and three valleys separated me from my destination, and when the curves in the mountains weren't retarding my progress, I maxed out on the desert straightaways, pushing 110 mph, the car's top speed.

time it took for me to ascend it—4 hours and 18 minutes.

Six minutes passed as I rearranged my attitude within the comfort of the Lincoln Town Car I had rented for the drive to Badwater. I had wanted a Continental, because, after all, I was going from high to low in the continental United States, but I couldn't find one available in all of Northern California. The Town Car accelerated pretty well, however, and it had killer brakes. I backed out of my parking space, turned onto the road heading into Lone Pine and floored it.

Accelerate, brake, turn, accelerate was all I did for the next couple of hours. Two mountain ranges and three valleys separated me from my destination, and when the curves in the mountains weren't retarding my progress, I maxed out on the desert straightaways, pushing 110 mph, the car's top speed. Animal eyes glinted in the dark, but no deer committed suicide on me; my only victim was a little chipmunk that made a barely perceptible thud as I made it one with the road. I traveled faster than my headlights allowed me to see, so I wasn't too disappointed that the car couldn't get closer to 120.

First the Owens Valley, then the Argus Mountains, then Panamint Valley. Once over the Panamint Range, I entered Death Valley, with its 20-mile straights. I made my final

turn just past Furnace Creek and pointed toward Badwater. It took 12 minutes to go that last 17 miles. Luckily, a sign just short of my final destination in Badwater warned of its approach. I pulled into the gravel lot overlooking the salt desert, braked to a halt and ran down the bank and out a ways. I'd accomplished my goal in 6 hours and 18 minutes. I'd established my world record.

Despite the two other cars in the lot, there seemed to be no one on hand to witness the culmination of my magnificent achievement; instead, I settled for the desk clerk back at the Furnace Creek Motel.

By then, I had had time to think about exactly what I had done. My 4:18 descent was mediocre at best. I later learned that the woman who passed me on the trail made it up in 3:48 and down in 3:09. One guy, I learned, has descended in 1:59. Then there was the driving time; it took me 1:54 to travel about 135 miles, an average speed of less than 70 mph.

And that's why I wanted to keep my record a secret until after the snows came, ensuring that it remained mine for at least six months. There are plenty of jocks out there, of both sexes, who could break it easily, knocking one, even two hours off my time. But even if they do, I won't care. Because I still did it first. •





The view from the Barceló Beach Huatulco Resort.

Huatulco, Oaxaca

Get warm with the worm on Mexico's Pacific Coast

By John Ledesma



The ideal vacation destination should offer equal opportunities to let loose and to simply chill. The state of Oaxaca on Mexico's southern Pacific shore is home to the Bays of Huatulco, the loosest and chilliest tropical paradise this side of Bali.

Seasoned travelers often shy away from a location described as a "tropical paradise," and their reasoning is understandable. Such places frequently are overrun with obnoxious tourists, suffer from inflated prices and simply don't live up to the hype. Parts of Hawaii come to mind, as do popular Mexican hot spots such as Puerto Vallarta, Cancun and Acapulco. Huatulco is an exception to the rule. Here you easily can find your own secluded beach, ten bucks will get you an elaborate lobster dinner, and the hype actually underestimates the experience.

Until about 15 years ago, Huatulco was little more than a picturesque fishing village and small-time port. Then the Mexican government decided to transform the intimate area into a tourist destination. Because tourism is a relatively new industry here,

Huatulco is free of the insincere trappings associated with many other tropical paradises. The local people are warm and generous, and in addition to welcoming the money that visitors spend here, they seem genuinely happy that people come and enjoy this special place.

Vacationers looking to escape workaday pressures are sure to appreciate a destination that rewards all good deeds with tequila. On the sandy shores of Huatulco, all deeds are good. Spend the morning floating among the stunning reefs of Bahia Chachacuale, and your dive master will bestow upon you a nice shot of tequila. Return from an afternoon of oceanside horseback riding, and you'll find an eager stable boy waiting with a smooth glass of the nectar. Make it to dinner at one of Huatulco's marvelous outdoor cafes by 10 p.m., and a smiling waiter will be quick to deliver the juice. Tequila is a bonding liquid in Huatulco—not a "Hey, let's

get drunk and spend the night with our heads in the toilet" kind of bond, but rather a "We're happy you're here and we hope you enjoy yourself" kind of bond. This distinction is important.

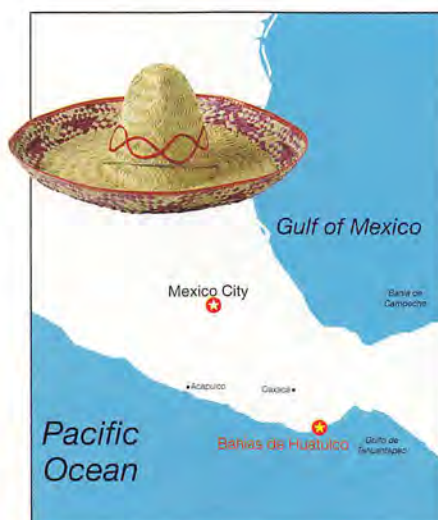
Of course, if you *are* looking to lose all inhibition, you can do that here as well. A wide array of adventures on both on land and in the sea are available all year round.

(Note: When dialing any of the following telephone numbers—except 800 numbers—from the U.S., precede the number with "011-52.")

Getting around and bedding down

Unlike some other tropical paradises, Huatulco is easy to get to. It's located just 50 air minutes from Mexico City, and **Mexicana Airlines (800) 531-7921** flies directly into the area from many U.S. cities. Ground transfers to local hotels can be arranged through **Paradiso Huatulco Agency (958) 10-218**, and cabs are the only transportation you'll need once inside the city limits.

The wide selection of hotels in Huatulco makes it easy for every type of vacationer to find something that will suit both his pleasure and his wallet. Plenty of frugal party people stay at **Hotel Marlin (958) 70-055** in Santa Cruz, but the best way to experience the area is to check into one of the many wonderful all-inclusive resorts, where you can enjoy an unlimited choice of foods and bottomless beverages at all hours of the day or night. The **Barceló Beach Huatulco Resort (958) 10-055** is one of the best, as it sits right on the sand and features four seaside pools and a huge selection of parties and activities. The **Gala Resort**



(958) 10-000 is another impressive all-inclusive establishment. It includes 300 five-star suites, four great restaurants and a mind-numbing disco. Both resorts boast a splendid buffet and sit-down dining. Concierge services at both of these hotels can arrange any and all activities around town.

By land

The Bays of Huatulco owe much of their breathtaking beauty to the dense jungle that surrounds them. In summer, fall and winter, green dominates the landscape, as innumerable and exquisite species of flora intertwine along the hills and valleys of the surrounding Sierra Madre del Sur. But don't be satisfied with just kicking

back with a Tecate and admiring this breathtaking scenery, get out and explore the jungle's depths.

You can hike your way in, but perish the "Crocodile Dundee" fantasy you have about bushwhacking a path through the dense bush; it's not possible. You'll be lost before you can say, "Ay! Dios mio!" Find yourself a guide in town (ask your concierge) and stay on the trails. If you prefer a less physically demanding jungle tour, you can rent an ATV from **Motor Tours (958) 10-024** and four-wheel it through the rain forest. The coolest way to explore the jungle, however, is via a mountain-bike excursion with **Aventuras Huatulco (958) 71-096**.

A bit more spirit is required to see

the jungle on horseback. You'll find experienced guides and horses at **Rancho Caballo del Mar (958) 70-530**. Its two-hour ride along not-so-well worn trails travels deep into the flora and out to fantastic vistas culminating at the crashing shoreline. Equestrian-confident cowboys and cowgirls can run their horses through the surf for what promises to be one of the most unforgettable adventures of the trip—if not their lives. The Rancho Caballo del Mar package includes a delightful lunch of beef and seafood served at tables set up right on the sand.

The jungle is also home to one of Huatulco's most aromatic attractions, its coffee plantations. Half- and full-day trips that travel high up into the hills are available through **Aventuras Huatulco (958) 71-096** to connoisseurs of the bean. The reward is a phenomenal trek and a taste of the rich pluma blend for which the region is famous.

If you prefer to do your sightseeing from the links, check out the **Tangolunda Golf Course (958) 10-037**. This 18-hole layout winds among the mangrove stands and exposes golfers to numerous indigenous birds and plants. The course incorporates three lakes and runs right down to the beach for a terrific view of the bay.

After a day in the wild or on the golf course, it's time to siesta, shower up and get ready for a night on the town—which can be a jungle in and of itself.

The evening in Huatulco, in familiar European and Mexican tradition, starts late and ends early—in the

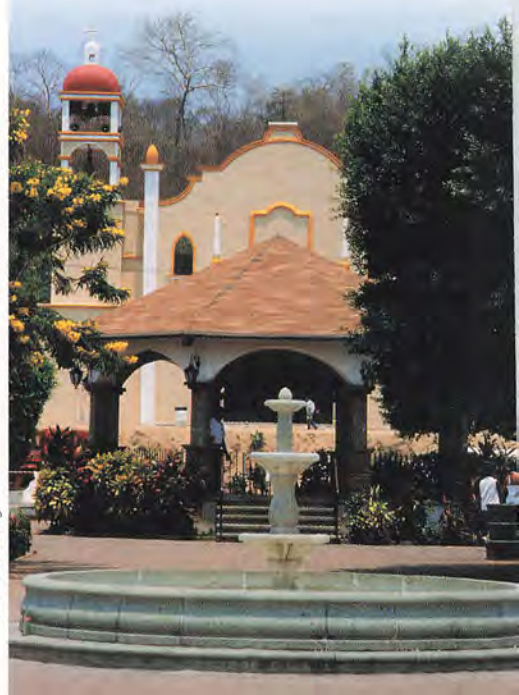


Warren Keating

The Tangolunda Golf Course.



Warren Keating



Warren Keating

morning. Don't even think about heading out until about nine. Begin your journey with giant and potent margaritas at **Sabor de Oaxaca (958) 70-060**.

For dinner, you can enjoy a delectably traditional menu while watching the Mexican song-and-dance Guelaguetza show at **Don Porfirio (958) 10-001**. Or you can go upscale at **Quinta Real (958) 10-429**, a hotel and restaurant that rivals any you've visited stateside. (Each suite boasts its own balcony hot tub.) Dinner is served on the patio with an exquisite view of the lights on the bay.

After-dinner libations are a must in Huatulco, and the place to go is Ven Aca on Santa Cruz Bay. The soothing sounds of the piano bar will allow you to refocus your energy, which you're gonna need, because now it's off to **Magic Circus (958) 70-017**. Young revelers from across the globe gather to party at this high-energy dance club. Here nobody knows your name, which you'll really appreciate when you find yourself shirtless under the disco ball at 4 a.m. No matter, your only next-day obligation is to roll out of bed and onto one of Huatulco's 36 pristine white-sand beaches and fall back asleep to the sound of the crashing surf.

By sea

Huatulco's most exciting sea activity takes place below the waves. A playground for scuba and skin divers, the nine bays, or *bahias*, have coral reefs, rocky crags and old shipwrecks that are home to everything from colorful triggerfish to elegant manta rays.

Huatulco gained notoriety centuries ago for its frequent visits by pirates. Swashbuckling rogues would hide out in the area's secluded bays and attack

incoming boats, sinking several of them. Perhaps you could pay for your trip by discovering some long-lost sunken treasure. In any case, do yourself a favor and call **Embarcacion El Pocamaxtli (958) 71-700** or the **Triton Dive Center (958) 70-884** to arrange a snorkel trip to Maguey Bay for an amazing adventure. After diving, swim to the Maguey Bay beach and enjoy a seafood lunch at **Restaurant El Costeno (958) 50-095**. Fresh shrimp, ceviche and lobster are served on the sand to appreciative, soggy patrons—along with the requisite tequila and Tecate.

If you prefer to catch fish rather than just look at them, Huatulco is as famous as the Baja Peninsula for its marlin fishing. Every morning, dozens of vessels head out loaded with tourists eager to land a sailfish, and most of them come back satisfied. There are also plenty of tuna, mackerel and squid in these waters.

Culinarily savvy anglers have their catch prepared at the port for lunch.

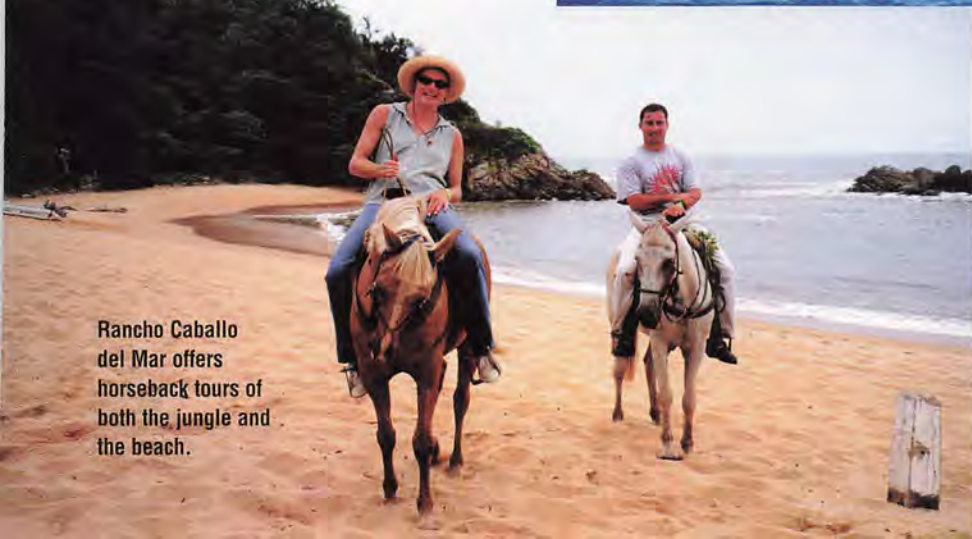
A great workout can be had by renting a sea kayak and paddling around Huatulco's mesmerizing coastline until your heart almost bursts. Speedboats will whisk you up and down the coastline on a thrilling parasail or water-ski trip. Or take in the sights as a deckhand on any number of sailboats available for hire. Many local seamen are eager to show tourists the area's unique beauty (and earn a few bucks while doing so).

In addition to ocean fun, Huatulco offers thrilling rafting excursions on the Copalita River. Rafters can embark on tranquil floats through low-hanging jungle vines or become one with the white water while negotiating treacherous rapids. Either way, participants will not soon forget the splendid combination of scenery and adventure. Just as they'll never forget the tropical paradise that is Huatulco. ●

Warren Keating



Santa Cruz.



Rancho Caballo del Mar offers horseback tours of both the jungle and the beach.

For Mas Information

The following agencies are partly responsible for Huatulco's transformation into a tourist destination and can answer questions you might have about the area:

- Fondo Mixto de Huatulco (958) 71-037
- Fonatur (958) 70-350
- Huatulco Hotel and Motel Association (958) 70-848
- State Tourism Office (958) 71-541.

Also check out www.baysofhuatulco.com.mx on the World Wide Web.



On a beautiful summer Sunday afternoon, I paddled my kayak across the Carquinez Straits, northeast of the San Francisco, where the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers join and meet their first salt water. Halfway across the 1,000-yard-wide shipping channel, I leaned back in my narrow craft and luxuriated in the peaceful solitude. It almost was the last quiet moment of my life.

A slight buzz, all but imperceptible, intruded on my consciousness like a mosquito flying around in another room.

The buzz got louder really fast, and within a matter of seconds it turned into a low roar. When I looked toward the direction from which it came, I saw a distant wide rank of offshore powerboats racing right at me. I spun my little vessel around and paddled my ass off back to the shore. By the time I reached safety and collapsed in exhaustion, the roar had completely overwhelmed me, the sound so horribly grand that I couldn't think anymore. I turned back to look at the spectacle that had come so close to rendering me hamburger just in time to see a guy in the nearest boat



By Terry Mulgannon

THE SEA-PARTING ACTION OF OFFSHORE POWERBOATS

SPLASH DOWN

wave his fist at me. Then his middle finger popped up, just so there could be no misunderstanding him.

Making a run

That was a few years ago, and when the Benicia Powerboat Race returned to my town last August, I arranged it so that rather than sitting in my kayak, I was lounging comfortably on the deck of a big cabin cruiser, a drink in hand, as a guest of Rob Storelee, organizer of the Pacific Off Shore Powerboat Racing Association (POPRA).

Photography: Chucke Walkden/racephotos.com

Our vessel, the Hangman II, was a committee boat and as such was positioned as the marker for the first turn of the race, where racers would have to slip the 75 yards of water separating us from the marker buoy. Oddly enough I didn't feel much safer than I did that time in my kayak. Having 20 or so powerboats travel straight at you at 100 mph isn't exactly relaxing no matter what size boat you're in.

The phalanx of boats narrowed and thinned as they approached for the first lap. The boats passed through the slender gap between us and the markers in ones and twos,

leaving a head-splitting noise and 40-foot rooster tails in their wake. After that first lap, the boats spread out and generally traveled singly around the course except when making a pass. It was as if they were out on their own little high-speed Sunday excursions, in contrast to my own painfully slow weekend jaunts.

Just a couple of weeks earlier, Storelee had rubbed my nose in the difference between my choice of boats and his, taking me out for a hot lap in his new vessel, a 37-foot Skater with a high-speed catamaran-style hull and a pair of 500-horsepower Mercury engines that come to life with a deep grumble. The sound resonates within your body, but you leave it behind as the vessel gains speed and the buffeting in the open cockpit grabs your attention.

We left the marina and banked right, heading west, toward the top of the San Francisco Bay. But instead of pointing toward the opening of the bay, the hull was making a beeline for the body of land separating us from the ocean. We picked up more speed until we were rocketing across the water so fast that I could see the wind stream coming off Storelee and his throttleman, positioned in the seat in front of me. The opposite shore was getting big fast, and as the drivers talked—I can't imagine how they could've heard each other—I could see the skin on their cheeks flapping in the wind.

It felt great, the adrenaline seemingly force-fed through my system by the intensity of the blasting air. Then Storelee angled the boat slightly to the left, aiming at the open water beyond the Carquinez Bridge. A wide turn under the structure sent us straight back toward the marina, a distance covered at a slightly saner speed. As we finally entered the harbor, I looked at my watch; it had taken just over five minutes to travel the eight-mile course, and we had topped out at around 110 mph.

The tour

Offshore powerboat racing has both national and international associations. Moving to the upper classes of the sport requires significant funding, for both equipment and entry fees. If your pockets are deep enough, you can land a starting position at just about any of the races, including the World Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Benicia, a suburb of San Francisco, is the site of one of about a half-dozen annual big-league powerboat races, and despite its generally flat waters, it can be the most dangerous. In fact, the race racked up a fatality a few years back—so far a rarity for the West Coast boat-racing circuit.

"Guys come to this race looking for points and bragging rights," says Brian Connors, president of the POPRA. "But they can get into serious trouble here if they don't check their egos at the door. Even experienced rough-water racers can learn things the hard way here."

Though most of the course takes place within a 7-mile-long, 1-mile-wide shipping channel, its western end sends racers out beyond the Carquinez Bridge into the very top of the San Francisco Bay. Here the tide piles up as it tries to force its way into the narrow opening while meeting the downflowing river waters. The straights also funnel winds between the vast, hot interior valleys of California and the cool Pacific Ocean. The gales create swells or chop going in one direction, while underlying currents may be going the other. The most common danger confronts you in a fast shift from flat water to a succession of watery walls.

"Guys come here after being the fastest guy on their lake back home," says Bob Teague, owner of Teague Custom Marine in Southern California, a racer and POPRA honcho, "And they think they can really cut loose here, because it looks like flat water. Then they go under that bridge and hit 6-foot rollers."

That's when the boat buries its nose and comes to a fast, soft stop, like running into a mountain of pillows. In the best of cases, the stern rears up—often ejecting the occupants if they aren't in a closed cockpit—and then plops back down into the water. In less fortunate circumstances, the boat flips over.

Serious desire

Offshore powerboat racing is probably the most expensive, dangerous hobby in the world. And it may be the only speed sport around for which someone with relatively little experience can plop down 100 or 200 grand or, say, a half-million bucks (it's just a matter of what class you want to race in), and end up in a starting lineup the next week, competing against the best there is at speeds upward of 100 miles per hour on rough water.

I met one guy at the Benicia race who competed in the new E-Class, which runs closed-cockpit boats with single 415-horsepower motors and price tags of around a hundred thousand. He explained that this was the ground floor of

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serious racing and that it was one of the purest classes—meaning that everyone races in almost identical boats. The E-Class is already a popular class on the East Coast, he said, a region, if you believe West Coasters, where cheating so proliferates the sport that getting away with it is an honored part of the competition. The guy told me that this was only his second race, but he'd already tasted victory. "The boat was finished on a Friday," he said, "it went into the water for the first time on Saturday, and we won on Sunday."

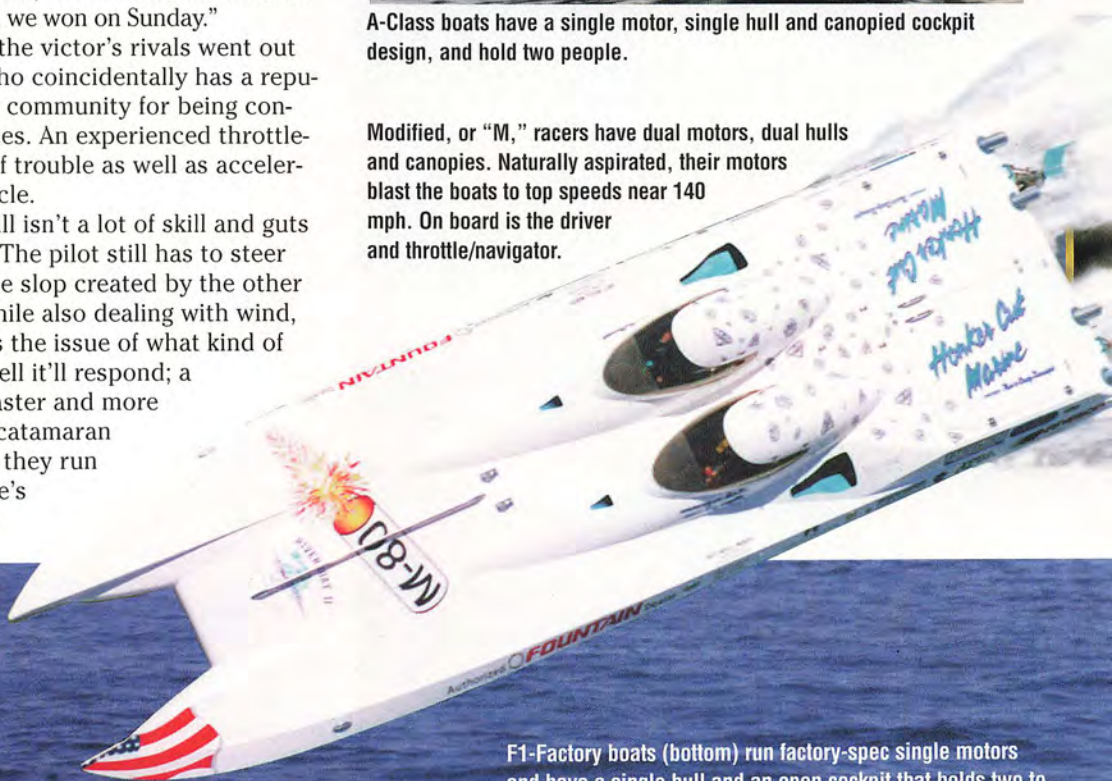
Envious of the win, one of the victor's rivals went out and stole his throttleman, who coincidentally has a reputation among the powerboat community for being connected with victorious novices. An experienced throttleman can keep his pilot out of trouble as well as accelerate him into the winner's circle.

Which isn't to say there still isn't a lot of skill and guts involved on the pilot's part. The pilot still has to steer through the washing-machine slop created by the other boats churning the water, while also dealing with wind, chop and swell. Then there's the issue of what kind of hull he's running and how well it'll respond; a monohull cigarette boat is faster and more stable in some situations, a catamaran hull in others. And although they run in different classes, everyone's still racing against everyone



A-Class boats have a single motor, single hull and canopied cockpit design, and hold two people.

Modified, or "M," racers have dual motors, dual hulls and canopies. Naturally aspirated, their motors blast the boats to top speeds near 140 mph. On board is the driver and throttle/navigator.



F1-Factory boats (bottom) run factory-spec single motors and have a single hull and an open cockpit that holds two to three people. F2-Factory (top) boats also have a single hull and an open cockpit that holds two to three people, but they run factory-spec dual motors.



“Guys think they can really cut loose here, because it looks like flat water. Then they go under that bridge and hit 6-foot rollers.”



else on some level. Finally, you have to finish. Despite all the money spent on these craft, they break down with a staggering frequency.

The final lap

While the first lap of an offshore powerboat race usually finds competitors in close proximity, a clear pattern emerges by the second lap. In the Benicia race I witnessed from the deck of the cruiser, *Honker Cut Marine* was leading with *Gone Again* closely chasing him. These were the big, modified speedsters—dual-engine, dual-hull monsters, running with more than a thousand horsepower each. These were the fastest boats in the event, and they offered the best competition of the day.

Halfway through the race, *Honker Cut Marine* and *Gone Again* were still dominating, but a boat named *Renegade* was hanging on closely. By the fifth lap, *Renegade* was leading the race. By the sixth and final lap, *Renegade* proclaimed its superiority by opening a large gap between it and the next boat, *Gone Again*. *Honker Cut Marine* was nowhere to be seen. On the final straightaway, *Gone Again* died just as *Renegade* took the victory.

A boat named *Kidstuff* claimed second place after having followed the leaders so far back that it hardly seemed part of the race. The *Kidstuff* crew exemplified all the strengths and weaknesses that plague this level of boat racing. Driver Kelly Mahon had never raced a boat before and had only put in two laps before heading to the starting line. He didn't figure to do all that well, but as it turned out, finishing was almost as good as winning, as everyone else except *Renegade* had dropped out.

"I race off-road, so I'm used to the speed," Mahon said of his decision to race in a boat he'd hardly driven. His throttleman, after all, would control the speed and guarantee that he didn't drive over his head. Under his head was plenty good enough. "It was a million-dollar opportunity to race here, and I don't have a million dollars. This was my chance, and getting second was great."

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SINGLES METER

By Gabriel Sheffer

This summer offers a variety of flavors for you to chill with. Among them, new music from your favorite rock critic's favorite band, Pearl Jam; a sweet little Tool spin-off, A Perfect Circle; and the return of Eminem. But, alas, the sunshine also brings the stinky bubblegum of Britney, the formula of Vitamin C and the odd old Eagle, Don Henley. With every up there comes a down, so listen here and be wary of girls with bright orange hair named after nutritional supplements.



Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam

Rock

Artist: **Pearl Jam**

Song: **"Nothing As It Seems"**

Rating: ★★★★★

I cannot tell a lie. I've loved Pearl Jam since Eddie Vedder was wearing diapers. "Nothing As It Seems" is pure and great. If only grunge's other champions didn't think it was better to burn out than fade away. Pearl Jam prove that writing quality music is what truly matters.

Legend: ★★★★★ = best

Artist: **Ninedays**

Song: **"Absolutely Story of a Girl"**

Rating: ★★★

Yes, their song sounds like the stuff of Third Eye Blind, Matchbox Twenty and Collective Soul, but Ninedays have something going for them those others bands don't: They're *not* those other bands! That alone should make this piece of ear candy easier to swallow. As for the song, its cheerful enough once through, but anyone demanding to listen to it again a half-hour later should be beaten immediately. Just sing the chorus; you'll remember it for at least another five weeks.

Artist: **Travis**

Song: **"Why Does It Always Rain on Me?"**

Rating: ★★

Ahh, the British, that fine specimen of human: a bit removed, a tad dry and a mouth full of busted teeth. Haven't they figured out that gloom and self-pity haven't sold in America since Pearl Jam's second album? "Why does it always rain on me?" asks singer Fran. Could it be because you have a girl's name, *Fraaaaan*?

Artist: **Don Henley**

Song: **"Taking You Home"**

Rating: ★

If you think the title of this song means that Don Henley has returned to his classic rock roots, you're wrong. Instead, this nostalgic, unbearably cheesy tune pays homage to a dear, loved one, replete with repetitious background singers. "Taking You Home" takes you to a land of synthesized balladry the likes of which have never before been charted. Watch out.

Hard Rock

Artist: **A Perfect Circle**

Song: **"Judith"**

Rating: ★★★½

A side project of Tool frontman



DJ Muggs of Cypress Hill

Maynard Keenan, A Perfect Circle delivers the same kind of lush hard rock that made Tool so popular. Although "Judith" isn't as dynamic as anything in that band's catalog, she still manages to sound appealing, seeming ever so cool alongside such hit-makers as Matchbox Twenty on your "alternative" radio station.

Artist: **Papa Roach**

Song: **"Last Resort"**

Rating: ★★

With a circular riff that borrows much from the gods of heavy metal (think Iron Maiden meets Judas Priest), Papa Roach manages to distract the kiddies with an anthem about—what else—suicide. There's a new spike on the heavy-metal leather wrist band. Thanks, but we can do without this retro-flavored crud. Watch out, a musical return to the '80s seems imminent!

Hip Hop

Artist: **Eminem**

Song: **"The Real Slim Shady"**

Rating: ★★★★★

No doubt, yo. Check it. Dis joint ain't like a true Slim Shady rap, 'cause, you know, it's like Marshall Mathers, right? Actually though, this phat jam is Slim keeping it real. And it works. He disses Christina Aguilera, and he don't care. As they say in the ladies' locker room, "Right on, yo."

Rap

Artist: **Cypress Hill**

Song: **"Superstar"**

Rating: ★★★½

We don't really need a new track about how tough it is to be rap superstars, do we? After all, what's so tough about banging Carmen Electra, driving a Lexus, having a rottweiler and keeping it real at the MTV Video Music Awards? Leave it to the 'Hill to figure all that out. "My own son don't know me/I'm chillin' in the hotel room lonely," complains B-Real. Lucky for him, DJ Muggs' dark symphonic touches carry this song all the way to the bank.

Pop

Artist: **Christina Aguilera**

Song: **"I Turn to You"**

Rating: ★★½

Christina can turn to us anytime.

Artist: **Vitamin C**

Song: **"Graduation (Friends Forever)"**

Rating: ★½

You're sitting in a record-label boardroom in L.A. It's spring 1999 and someone says, "You know, there aren't any real catchy graduation songs for next year." And someone else says, "Let's get one of these teeny boppers to sing one." Here



Eminem

it is. Fit with the "perfect" beat—and, oh, excuse me, Mr. Bowie, while I just totally rip you off (but make your stock rise). This turd-fest is more contrived than a presidential campaign.



Tara Caron/afetna

Vitamin C

Artist: **Britney Spears**
Song: **"Oops! I Did It Again"**
Rating: ★

Oops. How is it possible that something can suck this much and not feel good? The video casts the teen queen as the romantic lead in a "Mission to Mars"-inspired adventure. Her unfortunate acting aspirations are distressing. Is a cameo in 'N Sync's movie in the future? As for the song itself, Britney continues to be her own biggest influence, yet again ripping off last year's formulaic hits. "I'm not that innocent," she purrs. So not only is Britney giving Robert Plant a run for his money on the "baby, baby" count, she's also filling her li'l black book? ●

The Baker's Dozen

Cristina Martinez of the blues-punk combo Boss Hog takes on the Baker and emerges unscathed



Marilyn Goodacre/Rena



Yo La Tengo



P.O.D.



The Makers



Pink Floyd



Common



Cypress Hill



"High Fidelity"

It's tough figuring out which new albums are worth dropping coin on. The following albums, all released within the past few months, are worth picking up if...

P.O.D.

The Fundamental Elements of Southtown

...you're looking for a hard-rock album influenced by God and Rage Against the Machine.

The Makers

Rock Star God

...you've had it with rock bands influenced by Rage Against the Machine.

Pink Floyd

Is There Anybody Out There?

...you never got to see *The Wall* live or just wish you had.

Yo La Tengo

And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out

...you're into meditative, seductive rhythms, yet like to think of yourself as an indie rocker.

Common

Like Water for Chocolate

...you're a member of the Roots, love the Roots or wish that every CD you've ever bought sounded like the Roots.

Cypress Hill

Skull and Bones

...you like Cypress Hill.

Soundtrack for "High Fidelity"

...you can't make your own compilation tape or have nothing better to spend your money on.

Real Edge: What was your first concert?

Cristina Martinez: I think it was probably the Velvet Monkeys in Washington, D.C.

RE: What's the most embarrassing CD in your collection?

CM: I'm sure there are many. Umm... Fiona Apple. The last one, *When the Pawn...* whatever.

RE: What's your favorite fast food?

CM: Definitely, without a doubt, McDonald's cheeseburgers.

RE: What's your favorite TV theme song?

CM: Barretta.

RE: Have you ever broken a bone?

CM: I've fractured a couple of bones. I've never had a clean break though.

RE: What really pisses you off?

CM: Um... let me think of what will get me everyday. Lies.

RE: As a kid, what was your favorite toy?

CM: Mud.

RE: Have you ever had any pets?

CM: I've had many, many, many pets. I have two cats now whose

names are Baba and Bunny.

RE: What's your favorite curse word?

CM: Motherf---er

RE: What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

CM: I had crocodile. It was gross. It was tough and scaly.

RE: Ginger or Mary Ann?

CM: Oh, that's so hard. That's so hard. I would say that when I was little it was Mary Ann, and now I think it's Ginger.

RE: American League or National League?

CM: I don't know sports from beans.

RE: Five words to describe you...

CM: Oh, I hate that question. You know, it's impossible to answer without being pompous or idiotic. OK, so pompous, idiotic... Very charming. OK, let's say charming. Let's take idiotic out. Let's just make it pompous, charming, loyal... Umm... I'm up to three now? You're killing me. I can do this.

Boss Hog's latest release, *White Out*, is on sale now in music stores nationwide.

THE...REAL...EDGE...ROCK...TICKER

By Gabriel Sheffer

The Rolling Stones are the subject of a \$1 million lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in California on May 4 over the song "Saint of Me" from the album *Bridges to Babylon*. Songwriters Mark Gaillard and Mary Anderson are claiming the Stones' song contains some of

information leading to the arrest of the parties responsible for a fire set at his home on April 28. Master tapes of unreleased material and pieces of memorabilia were destroyed in the blaze....'N Sync is planning on making "'N Sync—The Movie," over which the

band will have creative control. Should be a hit.... More bubble gum: 'N Sync's *No Strings Attached* tour, with opening acts Sisqo

and Pink, kicked off May 9 at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi. When asked about the diverse lineup, 'N Sync members Joey Fatone and J.C. Chaisez said, "Since our album is just a little tad bit R&B-ish, we want to bring something a little bit different to the table. I mean, like, the last tour we had a slew of, like, different people." It's a good thing these guys don't write their own lyrics....Brits Massive Attack have allowed Armani to use



Tara Cannata/Retna

their track "Angel" in a global ad campaign. The band will be donating profits to charity, mainly the Red Cross....Pete Townshend recently auctioned guitars and memorabilia over the Internet for charity. The auction, organized to benefit Oxfam's Emergency Programmes in Mozambique and Ethiopia, included Eric Clapton's '57 Strat; a Rickenbacker reissue Pete Townshend model 335 circa 1988; letters from Paul McCartney, Keith Richards and Eric Clapton; various awards given to The Who; clothing and more....In other auction news, KISS teamed up with Butterfield's Auctioneers and Greg Manning Auctions to unload some of their original costumes, instruments, memorabilia and personal items last month in Los Angeles. Wonder who got the platform shoes....John Lennon wannabe Liam Gallagher of Oasis met Yoko Ono for the first time at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Liam named his son Lennon, and upon hearing of the baby's name, Yoko sent the singer baby clothes and toys. British reports said Liam and Yoko got on fabulously. We think she was confused....The



The Rolling Stones

the same lyrics and music as one of their original compositions....Amid accusations that his band's lyrics are homophobic, Bloodhound Gang's Jimmy Pop has penned an article for the hardcore gay porn magazine *Homosex*. Bassist Evil Jared has offered to pose for the rag....Rap star DMX was sentenced to 15 days in jail May 3, after pleading guilty to drug possession charges, driving without a license and having outstanding parking tickets....Meanwhile, Limp Bizkit frontman Fred Durst got some good news May 5, when fifth-degree assault and disorderly conduct charges against him were dismissed at a hearing in St. Paul, Minnesota....R&B singer D'Angelo had to cancel dates in Toronto due to "respiratory problems with a serious throat infection" that left him unable to perform. Great, there's finally a cool R&B guy, and now he can't sing....At press time, soul father James Brown was offering a \$20,000 reward for



Steve Granitz/Retna

Pink

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Anything Can Happen

Wyclef Jean seeks refuge from his Fugee past By David Peisner

Wyclef Jean is relaxing at Hit Factory Studios in New York City, where he's putting the finishing touches on

The Eclectic: Two Sides to the Book, the follow-up to his widely acclaimed 1997 solo debut, *Wyclef Jean Presents the Carnival*. The new album, due in stores this month, is aptly titled. It's an almost dizzying montage of styles and influences that picks up where his forward-thinking debut left off.

Everything from classic soul and country to reggae and rock find a home in Jean's global village, though hip-hop, of course, is still the village chieftain.

"I've matured as an artist, as a producer, as a songwriter and as a hip-hopper since *The Carnival*," Jean declares a few minutes into our conversation. But despite his confidence, there's an unmistakable monkey on the Haitian-born MC's back, and it's looking more and more like an 800-pound gorilla as each day passes. The chimp in question is the Fugees, the ground breaking hip-hop trio of which Wyclef is a founding member.

Back in 1996, the Fugees' second album, *The Score*, rewrote the hip-hop rule book. On it, Jean and his Fugee-mates—Prakazrel "Pras" Michel and Lauryn Hill—proved hip-hop could speak to everyone, not just the thug on the street-corner or the college student in his dorm-room but the middle-aged housewife in the suburbs as well. *The Score* was Public Enemy, Dr. Dre, De La Soul, Nina Simone and Bob Marley, all rolled into one cohesive package, and its innovation did not go unnoticed or unrewarded. The album won two Grammys and went on to sell more than 17 million copies worldwide.

It also launched all three Fugees into successful solo careers. Jean's *Carnival* hit first, and then Pras' single "Ghetto Supastar" hit No.1, but it was Hill who hit hardest, dropping the *Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* in 1998 and stopping the music world in its tracks. She gobbled up five Grammys for the multiplatinum album and

quickly became one of pop music's biggest stars. All the while, Jean kept busy, producing albums by up-and-coming rappers like John Forte and Canibus, collaborating with industry vets like Carlos Santana, Whitney Houston and Bono, and involving himself in seemingly every benefit concert he could find. Pras did some producing of his own and also made the jump to the silver screen with a role in the movie "Mystery Men." The one thing none of them did was begin work on the next Fugees album.

Jean acknowledges the long shadow the group's success has cast on him from the opening moments of *The Eclectic*. In a pointed skit that opens the album, Sony Music chief Tommy Mottola asks Jean, "What's this *Eclectic* stuff?" before telling him he's "gotta get the Fugees back together." The skit continues with Jean explaining that his fellow Fugees haven't been returning his phone calls, so he just went ahead and did his own album. Mottola tells him "to call back when he's got another Fugee record."

"That's just a joke," Jean claims of the skit. "It's just a question which is asked everyday, whether it's the label or walking down the street. It's just me making humor out of it. Clef humor."

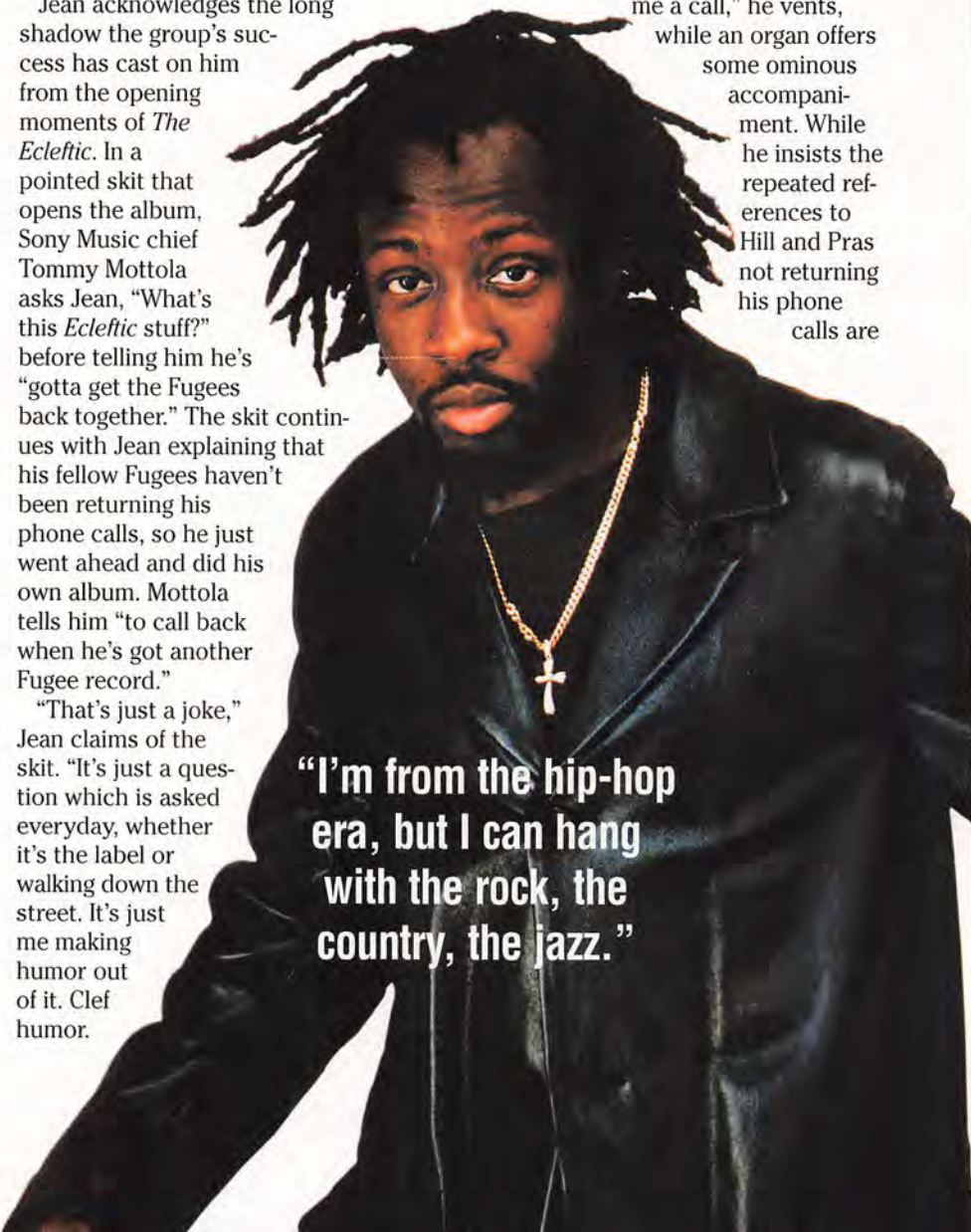
Whatever I do, my record company supports me 100 percent. I have a lot of respect for Tommy Mottola.

"Make sure you print that part," Jean adds with a laugh. But while he may be able to make light of the situation, it's clear that, like every good joke, there's a certain underlying truth to it. "Where Fugee At?," the track that follows the skit, seems to prove that very point.

"All I hear is Fugee this, Fugee that, where Fugee at?/I need the Fugees to pick up on this track/Lauryn, if you're listening, Pras, if you're listening/Give me a call," he vents,

while an organ offers some ominous accompaniment. While he insists the repeated references to Hill and Pras not returning his phone calls are

"I'm from the hip-hop era, but I can hang with the rock, the country, the jazz."



in jest, the media have been reporting tension among the three Fugees, particularly a competitive jealousy between Jean and Hill, for some time now. Jean, a gifted producer and multi-instrumentalist, initially was assumed to be the creative visionary of the group, but after Hill's solo success, he's been consistently forced to take second-billing to her.

The group's members continually deny any acrimony between them, though Jean admits he was disappointed with what he thought was a mediocre performance at the sales counter for his solo debut. While it went double platinum and spawned two Top 10 hits, (the loping ballad "Gone Till November," and the Bee Gees redux, "We Trying To Stay Alive"), the common perception was that the wildfire success of Hill's *The Miseducation* had stolen its thunder.

"I think, as Fugees, we're always gonna get compared," Jean explains. "It's because we're so successful in our other projects. If we was like Bel Biv DeVoe or New Edition, who'd care?"

"But I feel like *The Carnival* was supposed to sell more records," he continues. Without naming Hill specifically, Jean admits the timing might not have been right for his first album. "A lot of people should have had *The Carnival*, because it was a very musical album. But *The Carnival* was a test record, it was my freshmen album. I feel like more people is ready to hear and accept the sound of Wyclef now versus when he was doing *The Carnival*. I think this time around there will be a fair shot."

He certainly gives just about everyone something to hang on to with *The Eclectic*. A list of the people who showed up to give Jean a hand on the album gives a good idea of how wide he's throwing his net this time. R&B diva Mary J. Blige, country star Kenny Rogers, West African vocalist Youssou N'Dour, classic soul stirrers



Danny Clinch/Corbis Outline



Steve Sands/Corbis Outline

"All I hear is Fugee this, Fugee that, where Fugee at?/I need the Fugees to pick up on this track/Lauryn, if you're listening, Pras, if you're listening/Give me a call."

Earth, Wind & Fire and WWF superstar The Rock all lend vocals to the album. Jean also ends the album with a sincere take on Pink Floyd's rock classic "Wish You Were Here."

"I'm from the hip-hop era, but I can hang with the rock, the country, the jazz," Jean says. "I feel like they're really part of the same thing."

Emotionally, *The Eclectic* is an album of almost violent mood swings. He shows a playful sense of humor on the bouncy "It Doesn't Matter" and the strip-club ode "Perfect Gentleman," but he spews venom across tracks like "Pullin' Me In," "However You Want It" and "Diallo."

"The mood I went through is the mood of a worker," Jean explains. "You come to work, sometimes you feel good, sometimes you feel bad, sometimes you feel totally f---ed up. Sometimes, before going to work, you were at a strip bar. Sometimes you turn on CNN and see 41 shots in Diallo and say, 'That's f---ed up.' Sometimes on your way to work, you turn on the radio and listen to Pink Floyd."

Not surprisingly, it's the angry, venomous tracks that hit with the most force. Besides the Fugees long shadow, Jean's had to deal with charges from some in the hip-hop community that he's "not street enough," that he's gone soft. He uses *The Eclectic* as his chance to fire back.

"What, y'all thought I was too busy

writing songs with Whitney Houston?/Cause 'My Love's Your Love,' will be my slugs with blood/For any thug that wants to bang," he warns on the menacing "However You Want It." The track goes on to put the screws to many of his tormentors, but according to him, it's simply a reaction to what he perceives as a lack of respect from some of his peers.

"I definitely feel frustrated. I feel like I helped a lot of kids out and sometimes I feel like I got f---ed over," says Jean. He's been able to use the criticism to motivate himself, though. "I have something to prove every time I walk out there on the court. The day I do something and I don't feel like I've got something to prove, something's wrong with what I'm doing."

There will be little rest for Jean after *The Eclectic* is finished. Following a tour, he's planning on releasing a second volume to *The Eclectic* around Christmastime, and then, there's the little matter of finally getting the next Fugees record off the backburner and into production. Of course, living up to the promise of *The Score* is hardly an enviable task, but Jean isn't shying away.

"I think the expectation is going to be that when people turn on their CD player, they're gonna want to feel like they're in heaven," he says with the traces of a smile creeping from the corners of his mouth. "But life without no pressure is boring." ●



Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates in "Psycho."



Robert De Niro as Travis Bickle in "Taxi Driver."



Glenn Close as Alex Forrest in "Fatal Attraction."

Whacked out on the big screen

20 of the craziest film characters of all time By Dan Dunn

Nobody does crazy these days like Jim Carrey, Hollywood's reigning psychotic potentate.

In his newest film, the outrageous Farrelly Brothers' ("Dumb and Dumber," "There's Something About Mary") comedy "Me, Myself and Irene," Carrey plays Charlie, a gentle Rhode Island State Police officer saddled with split-personality disorder who wages war against Hank, his aggressive alter-ego, for the affections of the lovely Irene, played by Renée Zellweger.

As expected, Carrey delivers a performance of unparalleled unbalance, invoking the wild spirits of previous deranged souls from "The Cable Guy," "Batman Forever" and the Andy Kaufman biopic, "Man on the Moon."

Charlie/Hank is the latest in a long line of celebrated celluloid kooks, and in tribute to him and those who have short-circuited before him, we'd like to present, in no particular order, our list of The 20 Craziest Film Characters of All Time. And what better way to begin than with man who put the "psycho" back in psychopath.

The Nut: Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates in "Psycho" (1960).

Why, in a nutshell: Perkins will be forever linked to the most notorious scene in horror-film history—when Bates hacks Janet Leigh's character to death with a knife in the shower—and he wasn't even there! While Hitchcock and his crew filmed the shower slaughter in Hollywood with a body double, Perkins was in New York rehearsing for a play.

Freak speak: "She just goes a little mad

sometimes. We all go a little mad sometimes. Haven't you?"

The Nut: Robert De Niro as Travis Bickle in "Taxi Driver" (1976).

Why, in a nutshell: Pedophilia, violence and extreme paranoia are just a few of the many demons riding bumper cars in Bickle's cranium. Prior to opening fire on a politician, he opines that New York City deserves to be flushed down a toilet. Wait, maybe he isn't so crazy after all.

Freak speak: (into a mirror) "You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? Then who the hell else are you talkin' to? You talkin' to me? Well, I'm the only one here. Who do you think you're talking to? Oh, yeah? Huh? OK."

The Nut: Glenn Close as Alex Forrest in "Fatal Attraction" (1987).

Why, in a nutshell: Hollywood hath no fury like the woman Michael Douglas scorns in this flick. The consequences of infidelity are taken to new heights (and lows), most notably when the family rabbit becomes the main ingredient in a pot of vengeance stew.

Freak speak: "You didn't think you could just f--- me and leave, did you?"

The Nut: Dennis Hopper as Frank Booth in "Blue Velvet" (1986).

Why, in a nutshell: Straight from the mind of director David Lynch, Hopper's sadistic kidnapper/drug dealer has a strong affinity for esoteric music, deviant sex, Pabst Blue Ribbon and a certain naughty word that ain't "suck" but darn close.

Freak speak: "I'll send you a love letter!

Straight from my heart, f---er! You know what a love letter is? It's a bullet from a f---ing gun, f---er! You receive a love letter from me, you're f---ed forever! You understand, f---? I'll send you straight to hell, f---er!"

The Nut: Robert Duvall as Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore in "Apocalypse Now" (1979).

Why, in a nutshell: Many of you probably presume Marlon Brando's Colonel Kurtz to be the commanding loon in Francis Coppola's Vietnam-era masterpiece, but the truth is, Kurtz is simply misunderstood. Kilgore, on the other hand, loves the smell of napalm in the morning and surfing behind machine-gun boats while Charlie lurks nearby in the jungle. Is he afraid of being mowed down while hanging ten? Nah—Charlie don't surf!

Freak speak: "You either surf, or you fight."

The Nut: Kathy Bates as Annie Wilkes in "Misery" (1990).

Why, in a nutshell: Note to celebrities: When someone tells you he or she is your biggest fan, make like Michael Jackson and beat it.

Freak speak: (after James Caan's character tells her that all slum kids have potty mouths) "They do not! At the feedstore, do I say, 'Oh, now Wally, give me a bag of that f---in' pig feed, and a pound of that bitchy cow corn'? At the bank do I say, 'Oh, Mrs. Malenger, here's one big bastard of a check, now give me some of your Christ-ing money?'" *There! Look there, now see what you made me do!"*

The Nut: Malcolm McDowell as Alex DeLarge in "A Clockwork Orange" (1971).



Kathy Bates as Annie Wilkes in "Misery."



Jack Nicholson as Jack Torrance in "The Shining."

Why, in a nutshell: The movie poster hypes Stanley Kubrick's surreal epic as being "The adventures of a young man whose principal interests are rape, ultraviolence and Beethoven." Heavy emphasis, of course, on the ultraviolence. Kubrick once said the central idea of the film has to do with the question of free-will. Do we lose our humanity if we're deprived of the choice between good and evil? In DeLarge's case, the answer is an emphatic yes.

Freak speak: "What we were after now was the old surprise visit. That was a real kick and good for laughs and lashings of the old ultraviolence."

The Nut: Rutger Hauer as John Ryder in "The Hitcher" (1986).

Why, in a nutshell: The only thing more frightening than Hauer's murderous pursuit of C. Thomas Howell in this picture is what happened to Howell's career afterward.

Freak speak: (when asked by a policeman where he's from) "Disneyland."

The Nut: Jack Nicholson as Jack Torrance in "The Shining" (1980).

Why, in a nutshell: He house-sits at a remote mountain resort with the intention of writing a novel. Instead, he goes bonkers when he realizes he's married to Shelley Duvall and that their kid is really, really strange. Kills Scatman Cruthers' character with an ax, fondles an imaginary old woman, wears ugly clothes.

Freak speak: "I dreamed that I... that I killed you and Danny. But I didn't just kill ya. I cut you up in little pieces. Oh, my God. I must be losing my mind."

The Nut: Billy Bob Thornton as Karl Childers in "Sling Blade" (1996).

Why, in a nutshell: Sure, he saves a kid and his mom from the tyrannical Dwight Yoakam, but all the same, we reckon we wouldn't want to run into Childers in a dark alley.

Freak speak: "I don't reckon I got no reason to kill nobody." Yeah, sure you don't.

The Nut: Cindy Crawford as Kate McQueen in "Fair Game" (1995).

Why, in a nutshell: If Cindy thinks she can act, she's crazier than Norman Bates. Not even an astute wardrobe department—which wisely stuck with a minimalist motif for the supermodel-cum-movie star—can keep this game from going into sudden death.

Freak speak: Pick a line, any line. The dialogue is harder to swallow than a cat-hair sundae.

The Nut: Robert Carlyle as Francis Begbie in "Trainspotting" (1996).

Why, in a nutshell: A violent alcoholic whose idea of sport is a short-distance crotch kick. His hobbies include committing armed robbery with toy guns and unwittingly charming transvestites. Hangs out with junkies, but doesn't do drugs—like the President in college.

Freak speak: "Now, listen to me, you little piece of junky shit. A joke's a f---ing joke, but you mention her again and I'll cut you up. Understand?"

The Nut: Randall "Tex" Cobb as Leonard Smalls in "Raising Arizona" (1987).

Why, in a nutshell: Because all the characters in Coen Brothers' movies are nuts. Tex gets the nod for overall appearance.

Freak speak: "Name's Smalls. Leonard Smalls. My friends call me Lenny...only I ain't got no friends."

The Nut: Edward Norton as the Narrator in "Fight Club" (1999).

Why, in a nutshell: He wants to be Brad Pitt. **Freak speak:** "First one through this door gets a lead salad!"

The Nut: Bette Davis as Jane Hudson in "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane" (1962).

Why, in a nutshell: You can see it in her Bette Davis eyes.

Freak speak: "I've written a letter to Daddy. His address is heaven above."

The Nut: Lotte Lenya as Rosa Klebb in "From Russia With Love" (1963).

Why, in a nutshell: Kills victims with a poisoned spike stuck in the sole of her shoe. Passes on opportunity for lifelong love affair with studly James Bond.

Freak speak: (on why she uses live human beings for target practice) "Training is useful, but there is no substitute for experience."

The Nut: Crispin Glover as Cousin Dell in "Wild At Heart" (1990).

Why, in a nutshell: His appearance in the movie spans less than two minutes, but we defy you to cite a stranger performance.

Puts cockroaches on his anus and dresses like Santa Claus to ward off imagined aliens wearing rubber gloves.

Freak speak: (to his mother after she asks why he's making hundreds of peanut butter sandwiches at 3 a.m.) "I'm making my lunch!"

The Nut: Anthony Hopkins as Dr. Hannibal Lecter in "The Silence of the Lambs" (1991).

Why, in a nutshell: Ate a census taker's liver with some fava beans and a nice chianti. Hell, even the most unsophisticated dolt knows census taker's liver is best served with merlot.

Freak speak: "I do wish we could chat longer, but I'm having an old friend for dinner."

The Nut: Robin Williams as Parry in "The Fisher King" (1991).

Why, in a nutshell: Long before he gave in to his maudlin impulses, Williams was the Jim Carrey of his generation. And because we're *huge* Mork from Ork fans, Williams gets the sentimental vote.

Freak speak: (singing) "Holding my penis...what a wonderful way of saying how much you like me."

The Nut: John Cleese as the Black Knight in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975).

Why, in a nutshell: Loses both arms and legs and still wants to fight King Arthur. That's one crazy sonofabitch.

Freak speak: (assessing the loss of his limbs) "Simply a flesh wound." ●

Forever Hip

By Cam Benty

427 Cobra

The Mr. Universe of muscle cars

Its lines are ferocious, venomous, perfection. Twist the key, and its thin aluminum body quivers, seemingly ill-suited to contain its power source. Dump the clutch and smash the throttle—if you're man enough—and its Goodyears go up in smoke. Crank through the Ford Top Loader four-gear transmission and then nail the brakes to halt to a stop. The target? Zero to 100 mph and back to 0. How long? 14.3 seconds. The car? The 427 Cobra. It set this standard in 1965, and every performance car built since has aspired to it.

In 1962, the 427's predecessor, the original Cobra (then powered by the little 260cid Ford used in the Ford Falcon), debuted and became a smash hit. The Cobra's creator, Carroll Shelby, an oft-described chicken rancher from Texas, was the essence disarmingly shrewd. A racer of note on his own, competing in Maseratis and Aston Martins through the '50s, Shelby had a heart condition that cut short his driving career—but not his passion. He would become America's preeminent performance-car builder. His mission: kick Ferrari's ass.

He did it with a hybrid, by slipping the little Ford V-8 between the fenderwells of an even tinier English car called the A.C. Bristol. While the 260 and 289 engines weren't big on power for the time, housed in that aluminum-bodied English wrapper, the Cobra had a better power-to-weight ratio than anything else of that era.

But if absolute power corrupts, then Shelby's 427 Cobra was a complete degenerate. The 427 debuted at Riverside Raceway in Riverside, California, in 1965, alongside the Ford Mustang-based Shelby

GT350. Clearly Riverside was the perfect place to wring out this race car in wolf's clothing. (The GT350 must have looked like a Yugo in comparison.)

With its claimed 425-horsepower rating, the 427cid side-oiler big-block Ford engine required a completely redesigned frame just to keep the car from twisting into scrap aluminum. The new chassis used two massive tubular frame members running the length of the car in

racing Blue Dot tires were wrapped around true knock-off mag wheels. And for the sensory-overload enthusiast, there was the SC package of optional pieces, including side exhaust, dual four-barrel carbs, a hood scoop and a 32-gallon fuel tank with a quick-fill cap.

The 427 Cobra was like a shot gun—only more violent. Point the nose and shoot, and hopefully you'd wind up close to where you'd hoped to go.

\$7,000, you could buy a race car for the street.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then the Cobra is the most honored car of all time. Fewer than 1,000 289 and 427 Cobras were produced by Shelby, but in their image, more than 50 different companies have produced replicas in fiberglass, and even a few in aluminum. To the true Cobra enthusiast, these copies were all just wannabes—close but no

It set the standard in 1965, and every performance car built since has aspired to it.



an attempt to hold the drivetrain in place. The brakes were big Girling discs at the four corners.

But it was the body that was so amazing. While the 289 had maintained many of the original A.C. Bristol contours and even the delicate wire wheels, the 427 was all new. The aluminum body bore only slight resemblance to the A.C. original. It was pumped up with massive fender flares, an elongated grille area (and remote oil cooler opening) and new gauge and steering components. Goodyear

Not listed on the 427 Cobra's window sticker: a windshield that provided minimal wind protection at best, side window curtains in place of roll-up windows, shoe-searing cockpit temperatures and the constant, deafening roar of black-chromed unprotected sidepipes that would leave burn marks on many a leg during both entry and exit. No air conditioning. No cup holders. No real comfort at all. Regardless of the driving challenges, however, the 427 was the ride of a lifetime. Just think, for around



snake. Many were refined where the Cobra was raw. The original Cobra was crude and rude and as macho as achievable. It was the untamable snake that bit the unwary. A true piece of American history—with a little help from the British. •



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